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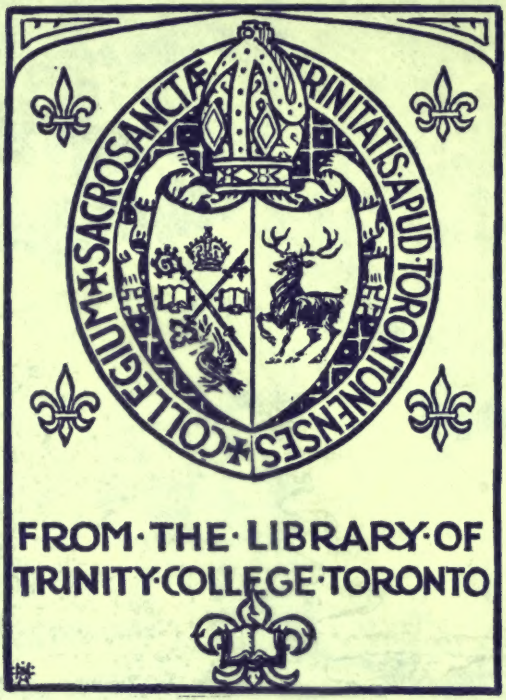

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ELY CATHEDRAL.

(Original etching by F. S. Walker, A.R.E.)

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

A HISTORY FOR THE PEOPLE

BY THE

VERY REV. H. D. M. SPENCE-JONES, D.D.

DEAN OF GLOUCESTER

VOL. II.

THE MEDIÆVAL CHURCH

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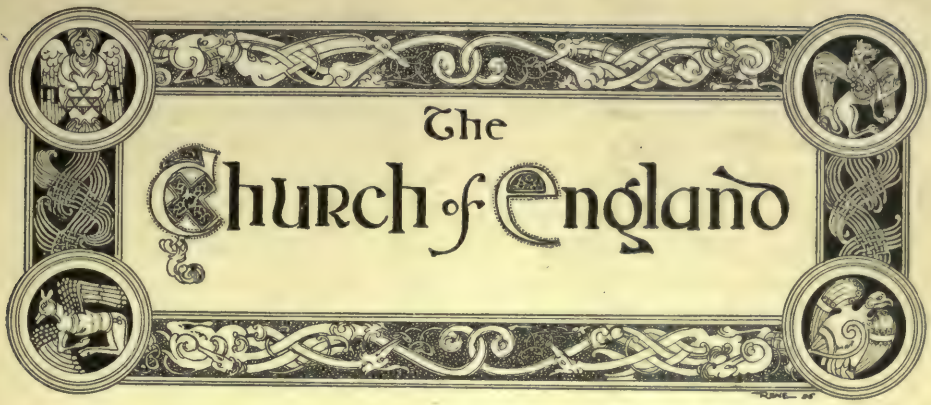


CHAPTER XXI.

THE DANISH SUPREMACY.

Connection of Secular and Ecclesiastical Story—Renewal of the Danish Invasion—Changes in England which favoured It—Ethelred the Unready—Marries Emma the Norman, and thus Introduces Norman Influence into England—Swein's Great Invasion—Wessex Accepts Swein as King—His Death and Recall of Ethelred—Edmund Ironside—Divides the Kingdom with Canute—Death of the Ironside, and Accession of Canute to the Kingdom of all England—His Character—His Reign a Victory for Christianity—End of the Conflict with Paganism—Earl Godwin and His Sons—Canute's Sons Harold and Harthacanute—Canute's Earnest Religious Character—His Ecclesiastical "Cabinet" of State—"Letter to the People"—Memorial to Edmund Ironside—Canute's Influence upon the Church.

THE reader of this History may perhaps sometimes feel surprised that now and again the purely ecclesiastical story should be apparently interrupted by what may seem to him only secular matters. But we are travelling during this period over a comparatively little known district of history, when names of kings and bishops suggest but little to the reader, and in themselves possess little or no meaning. To have passed from Alfred and his archbishop Plegmund to the work of Dunstan, without a short sketch of the great kings who intervened between these two periods, would have been at once confusing and misleading. At an earlier stage, to have painted the desolation which the great Viking raids brought upon the church and state of England, without telling who and what these Vikings were, and what a stern spirit of hatred to Christ and His religion inspired their fierce war-bands, would have given but a maimed and distorted narrative at best, and have presented a totally inadequate view of the work of noble and religious Alfred. So here, to have written about Canute and his times, and the powerful influence which English Christianity had upon the great northern monarch who so strangely came to sit upon the throne of Alfred, and so ably took up his work among us, would have been a hopeless and confusing task, without gathering up the threads of the history which tell us how it came to pass that the northern Viking entered into the inheritance he ruled so well. Later in our story, again, to introduce the last Saxon

monarch, known in history as the "Confessor," Norman in spirit rather than English, and relate the great change in church and state begun by him and carried out by his kinsman the Norman William, whom men call the Conqueror, without dwelling a little upon the origin and character of these wonderful Normans, who exercised such a wide-spread influence on the continent of Europe, and who in England changed the theology and the practice, though not interfering with the unbroken continuity of our church, would be both misleading and not a little confusing.

Such are the reasons which determine any seeming "breaks" in the purely ecclesiastical story, and render it necessary in these far-back periods to introduce a thin thread—for it is little more—of the secular history of that time into the narrative. They will necessarily become more rare, as we advance into periods more generally known, in which names of kings and great ministers of state become to most readers something more than shadows. From the eleventh century downwards there are also no more startling "comings" of strange peoples among us, to change by their advent the whole current of our history, sacred as well as civil, as was the case in the earlier days of the story of England and her church.

King Ethelred the second, son of Edgar, after the short reign of his brother, Edmund the Martyr (murdered at Corfe), began to reign in 978. As we have related, Dunstan, finding no favour in the eyes of the young king and his advisers, quietly retired to his arch-see, and for ten years busied himself exclusively in ecclesiastical matters, dying in 988, and leaving behind him a name and fame perhaps unequalled in the long and honoured line of the primates of the English Church. But on the day when his strong, wise hand was removed from the helm of English government, may be said to have begun that terrible and long-drawn-out fresh drama of Danish raids and wars, which ended in the submission of all England to a Danish king.

In the north of Europe various events had been taking place, which led to the gradual consolidation of the Danish power. A great northern monarchy had in the days of Ethelred taken the place of the many petty jarls and Vikings, whose warships had been the terror of England in the days of Alfred. It was towards the close of the ninth century that a mighty Viking chief, Gorm the Old, had welded into one a number of Danish families or tribes, and in a half mythical city called Lethra in Zeeland, set up his new kingdom. For many years the famous chieftain met with varying success and failure, till in 934 the emperor of Germany, Henry the Fowler, routed his invading army of pirates, and shortly after his defeat we hear of Gorm's death. Two great mounds, marking the place of sepulture of the dreaded Viking and his wife, queen Thyra, preserve still the memory of his exploits near the town of Weile. His son Harold Blaatand, or Blue Tooth, succeeded to the authority of Gorm, and the chroniclers of that age of confusion and bloody wars again and again tell us of his deeds and valour. For a long period this Harold was the principal figure in the north.

The deadly conflict between Paganism and Christianity still occupied the foremost place in the disputes and endless fighting which occupied these Northmen even at home, when their fleets and armies were not engaged in foreign invasion. Harold Blue Tooth in later life was persuaded of the truth of Christianity, forsook the old heathen sanctuary of Lethra, and earnestly busied himself in turning his people from their old northern gods to the faith of Jesus. Not so his son, the subsequently famous Swein, who all his life was a fanatical supporter of Woden and Thor. The pagan son rebelled against the Christian father; and in the end the forces of heathendom triumphed, and Harold Blue Tooth died of his wounds at Jomsborg, a great Viking city at the mouth of the river Oder. Swein succeeded Harold as king, but was soon, in the varying fortunes of the endless wars and jealousies of the north, driven from the throne. He then became a wandering Viking chief—the terror of the seas. Wealthy England, especially during the reign of Ethelred, was the scene of his perpetually recurring raids; and for many years he led the life of a successful sea-pirate. In the year 1000 the fortunes of the Viking changed. Swein was recalled to Denmark, and for the next fourteen years, with short intervals, continued his wars with England—no longer, however, as a mere sea-rover, but as king of the great Danish nation.

A considerable change had gradually been coming upon English life since the days of Alfred, and in no small degree assisted the designs of the Danish invaders in the days of Ethelred (978–1016). The old free-man was disappearing, giving place to the man who did suit and service to a master, to whom he looked for protection and guidance. No doubt this change in the position of the old free cultivators of the soil was largely owing to the state of perpetual unrest and danger to home and hearth brought about by the long-continued wars and raids of the Vikings. Every man needed some powerful protector in those rough and stormy days.

But there was another cause which only too largely helped forward the Danish invaders. For the long period of thirty-eight years England was ruled by the only incompetent sovereign of the house of Alfred. Ethelred, the second of the name, surnamed "the Unready" or rather the "counsel-lacking" king (for that is the real meaning of the well-known epithet), was a bad man and a bad king. He was not "unready" or shiftless by any means, as the modern signification of the term would suggest, but restless and even energetic; only with an energy irregulated and misapplied—an energy which, as it has been well said, began enterprises and rarely ended them. He never seems to have had the good fortune in his long reign of meeting with any man of commanding genius, or with any true patriot. His advisers were unworthy favourites, who too often played him and their country false. In that age much depended on the ability and character of the ruler of a country; one great king like Alfred was often able to raise it to great prosperity, while an incompetent and weak sovereign like Ethelred could bring it to ruin and degradation.

During the earlier years of Ethelred's

unhappy reign, the Danish attacks took the form of mere piratical raids, resembling closely the old Viking method of harassing a land, and bringing in their train untold misery and ruin; but being local and temporary, making no great impression upon the nation generally. Gradually, as the reign of Ethelred advanced, however, the invaders grew more in earnest; the raid often ended in a permanent settlement, until the Viking hero, who for so many years had harassed the land and plundered the people, again determined to make of England an enduring conquest.*

For many of these earlier years, another figure appears by the side of Swein, and one equally terrible to the hapless English folk, the hero of many of the famous Northern sagas—Olaf Tryggvasson. In the somewhat confused chronicles and sagas which tell the story of this unhappy age, these two mighty Vikings—both sons of kings, both claimants to the chief thrones of the north (Swein to that of Denmark, Olaf to that of Norway), both exiles from their country, and in the end both kings again of their respective peoples — are found associated in their piratical work, now engaged together in the plundering expeditions; now again fighting alone on their own account; but for a long period they were the two most conspicuous figures among the dreaded northern Vikings. Then, in the many-coloured story of their lives, comes in the strange deadly combat between the two religions. Olaf became a Christian; Swein remained ever a deadly foe to the religion of Jesus. In the year 995 both the great sea rovers had recovered or won their crowns, but for a time the deadly enmity which had succeeded to the old friendship of king Olaf and king Swein, gave harassed England some respite for a season.

The wild life of one of these mighty Vikings—Olaf—came to a fitting close in 1000. The two old friends met together in deadly conflict. The scene of the fatal battle was their own loved Northern ocean, and the fight was long famous in the North. The words of the old saga are worth quoting, as they give us a vivid picture of the man who so long was a terror to our English forefathers:—"King Olaf stood on the *Serpent's* quarter-deck high above the rest. He had a gilded shield, and a helm inlaid with gold; over his armour he wore a short red coat, and was easy to be distinguished from other men. . . . . He asked, Who is the chief of the many ships coming upon us. They answered it was king Swein with the Danish host." The fight was long and stubborn; the great ships of Swein pressed closer and closer. "So thick," says the saga, "flew spears and arrows into the *Serpent*, king Olaf's ship, that the men's shields could scarce contain them." Olaf's men fell fast. His fleet was far outnumbered. At last the little group of fighting men about the king were all slain. Then king Olaf, tossing his shield over his head, leaped into the sea, and so perished.

The disastrous reign of Ethelred wore on. Though for some eight or nine years king Swein, occupied with home affairs, ceased to harass England, other Viking

* See generally for this period, Green: "Conquest of England," chapters viii., ix., and Freeman's "Norman Conquest," chapters v., vi.

chiefs at short intervals kept coming, and with fire and sword desolating various districts in England. It was in the year

Emma as his second wife. From his first marriage his brave but ill-fated son and successor, Edmund Ironside, sprang; from

SWEIN DEMANDING RANSOM.

1002 that Ethelred entered into that solemn alliance with the Norman settlers in Gaul, which was fraught with such momentous consequences to our land in after days. The duke of the Normans, Richard the Good, gave him his sister

his second, with the Norman princess, the saint-king Edward the Confessor.

This second marriage of Ethelred the Unready with the beautiful Norman princess was one of the momentous marriages of

the world, and has affected the entire history of western Christendom. Queen Emma inherited the well-known beauty of the princesses of her house, while the great talents, the surpassing ambition, the indomitable will of the more prominent of the children of Rollo were also characteristic features of this famous "Lady of the English." With her arrival in England, and influence over her husband, Ethelred the Unready, began the settlement of Normans in England, their gradual admission to English offices, their possession of English estates, and that friendship and close connection between Normandy and England which, a little more than half a century after the landing of Emma as queen on the English shores, rendered possible the Norman Conquest. The year 1002 thus witnessed the dawn of the new state of things in England. From that year onward Anglo-Saxon England was no longer the great solitary power which stood and acted alone in all important questions, ecclesiastical and civil, which agitated western Christendom. Slowly and gradually at first, but surely, Norman thought and Continental ways of working were introduced into the hitherto lonely island.

How ceaselessly queen Emma worked for this end, is shown by her strange second marriage with the bitter and triumphant foe of her first English husband. Her second alliance with Canute, the Danish king, enabled her, after the death of Ethelred, still to exercise the same, or even an extended influence, over English affairs. Indeed, from the day of her marriage with Ethelred in 1002, the Norman never loosed his hold on England. The grip was never relaxed through the reign of Ethelred and Emma, and that of Canute the Dane and Emma, and during the rule of queen Emma's two sons, Harold Harefoot and Harthacanute. It became stronger than ever in the course of the long life of Harthacanute's successor, Emma's son, Edward the Confessor, who had been trained and brought up in Norman Rouen, who passed away but nine short months before the fatal field of Hastings, A.D. 1066. Thus the shadow of Norman influence passed over Anglo-Saxon England in the year 1002; and the shadow ever deepened, until her great-nephew William the Conqueror made the Norman and Anglo-Saxon one people.

The same year in which he brought home his Norman bride, king Ethelred planned and carried out the hideous massacre known by the name of the mass-day on which the deed was carried out —St. Brice. Allowing for considerable exaggeration on the part of later writers, enough is certainly known of that fatal day to stamp the memory of Ethelred and his advisers for ever with undying shame. It was, of course, no general massacre of the Danes in England, for that would have included a large proportion of the dwellers in the north and east of the island. The slain on St. Brice's day were probably the Danes of the more recent invasions who had settled in different parts of England, and whose safety among a hostile people had been guaranteed on the faith of some recently concluded treaty of peace. Among the slain was Gunhild, a sister of king Swein. That the Danes were ruthless enemies in war-times, and treacherous guests in peace,

is certain; but the massacre deliberately planned by Ethelred and his ministers, and carried out, with a certain measure of success, on St. Brice's day, was at once cruel and senseless, and its immediate effect was to inflame the Danish people with a new spirit of hatred, and to inspire them with a determination to avenge the bloody and shameful deed.

The story of the next ten years of Ethelred's reign, 1002 to 1012–13, is a dreary recital of Danish wars and raids, some of the more formidable invasions being under the command of king Swein himself. The defenders of England, on sea and land, were by no means supine, and many a stubborn battle was fought; but treachery and want of national union seem again and again to have crippled and marred the many gallant attempts on the part of the English to drive out their formidable antagonists. We read, too, of constant efforts on the part of Ethelred to buy off the invaders with large sums of money; each ransom, however, so paid, only served to purchase a short peace, and really encouraged the pirates to make fresh efforts against so wealthy a nation.

The last invasion of king Swein in 1013, which resulted in his permanent conquest of well-nigh the whole land, was conducted on a larger scale than any of the preceding attacks. The chroniclers dwell on the splendour of the Danish fleet, which brought, it is said, the whole force of Denmark to the shores of the doomed island. We read of the magnificence of the stately Viking craft, of the birds and dragons floating on the tops of the masts, of the carved work in gold and silver and amber, which adorned the great war-ships of king Swein. The ravages committed by his host after they landed are painted in lurid colours. "He wrought," says the chronicler, "the most evil that any host might do." Farms and fields were ravaged, towns were burned, churches were plundered, men were slaughtered with a cruel slaughter. The south as well as the north of the island was ruthlessly harried. At Bath, after this destructive campaign, the Witan of Wessex formally acknowledged Swein as king, deposing Ethelred, who fled to his wife's relations in Normandy; and Swein was generally acknowledged king of England.

In one short month after the flight of Ethelred, a sudden change came over the strange scene of conquest and ruin. At the beginning of 1014 all England lay at the feet of Swein, who, in the south as in the north, was recognised as king in place of the fugitive Ethelred; in the February of the same year, about the feast of Candlemas, the mighty pagan conqueror lay dead in his tent at Gainsborough, in the midst of his victorious army. Our Latin chronicler, Florence of Worcester, usually discreet and seemingly truthful, preserves the legend of his strange and terrible death. Swein, the pagan champion, had a special hatred for the memory of St. Edmund, the East Anglian king, martyred by the Danish Vikings Ivar and Hubbo in 870. He demanded a great ransom from the famous monastery of St. Edmundsbury, in whose famous minster rested the revered body of the saint-king, threatening (a threat he was only too likely to carry out), if the huge ransom was not forthcoming, to burn

the church and religious house, and the town which clustered round the sanctuary, and to torture to death the hapless dwellers in the sacred walls. The story goes on to tell how king Swein, riding from his Gainsborough camp at the head of his army—a march which had the minster of St. Edmund as its goal—saw of a sudden a vision of king Edmund, in full war panoply, coming against him. "Help, comrades!" cried the awe-stricken Viking warrior; "I see St. Edmund coming with a spear to slay me." And, falling from his horse, he died that same night in great agony. The framework of this strange legend is evidently based on authentic history. Swein clearly did die as he was about to plunder and to destroy the shrine of St. Edmund and the great religious house which had arisen around the sanctuary; and the special reverence which his son Canute afterwards showed to St. Edmund, suggests that the Danes did, in some way, connect the death of the Danish conqueror with the vengeance of the outraged English saint.

[*Photo: F. R. Turner, Tewkesbury.*
SAXON WORK IN DEERHURST CHURCH.

The consequences of the death of Swein were memorable. The sudden removal of the mighty conqueror from the scene, seems to have fired the hearts of the English people with new hope. The disheartened Witan, which had so lately dethroned Ethelred and recognised the Dane as king, at once recalled its own discredited sovereign. The words of the invitation recorded in the Chronicle are evidently copied from the original document. They are singular, and throw a strong light upon the feeling of England towards Ethelred; sorrow and indignation at his past misrule alternating with loyalty and devotion to the descendant of Cerdic and the head of the beloved house of Alfred. "No lord," ran the document inviting him back to his kingdom, "could

be dearer to them than their lord by birth, if only he rule them more righteously than he did before."

Ethelred quickly returned, and at once marched against the dispirited Danish host, still encamped at Gainsborough, where their king, Swein, had died under such strange circumstances. Canute his son was elected at once king in his father's room; but the Danes evidently offered but a half-hearted resistance to Ethelred's force, for very soon we read of the formidable army of the once dreaded Swein re-embarking in the stately fleet, and sailing away to Denmark. This happened in 1014, and for a brief season England was free from the Danish invaders; but the end of the long and terrible drama was at hand. Ethelred was now sickening with the malady which put an end to his unhappy reign, which had lasted so many years. By his side was Edmund, surnamed Ironside, his eldest son, a worthy representative of the great line of Alfred. The relations, however, between the father and his gallant son were evidently strained, and when Canute, Swein's son and successor, returned in the following year, 1015, the resistance to the great invading army of the young Danish king was fitful and uncertain. The splendid gallantry and military skill of Edmund Ironside were sorely hampered by the indecision, perhaps by the jealousy, of Ethelred and his ministers. Canute and his host were rapidly gaining ground in various parts of England, when the news of Ethelred's death, in 1016, in some respects changed the position of affairs.

It was during the last years of Ethelred that we first hear of London taking its position as the leading city of England. From its unrivalled position it had gradually become the centre of the rapidly-growing English commerce, and its steady loyalty to the Saxon king during the Danish wars had given it a new and commanding position in the kingdom. In London, then, in the year 1016, Edmund Ironside was chosen king by the Witan there assembled, and received the crown of Alfred. It was but a sad inheritance. Almost at the same moment his formidable rival Canute the Dane was elected king by another Witan assembled at Southampton; and in the power of this doughty descendant of the Vikings lay, alas! most of England. During the next seven months

Photo: F. R. Turner, Tewkesbury.

SAXON WINDOW IN DEERHURST CHURCH, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

a most astonishing spectacle was presented. With an energy and skill which have been fairly termed almost superhuman, Edmund Ironside, by appealing to the patriotism of England, so long and so cruelly harried, gathered together in succession five considerable armies, and fought with the conquering Dane five pitched battles; with varying success, but, on the whole, the balance of victory remaining with the noble English king. In the sixth, however, of these deadly encounters, at Assandun, probably in Essex (Ashington), the most hotly disputed of all, there is no doubt but that the Ironside was defeated. Assandun was the grave of most of his devoted patriot friends.

Though, however, the victory was Canute's, it was evidently no decisive success; for soon after the battle the Englishman and the Dane met together on the Isle of Olney in the Severn, hard by the ancient church and religious house of Deerhurst. Part of the Saxon church, in which no doubt the Ironside worshipped, and not unlikely his great rival Canute also, after the celebrated Olney pact, is with us still. Then and thus was England again divided between its native Cerdic-descended prince and a Dane; nor was the division very unlike that made between Alfred and Guthrun. Edmund Ironside kept England south of the Thames, with East Anglia, Essex, and London; Canute taking the rest of the island. Apparently it was arranged that each prince was to succeed to the dominion of the other —certainly if he died childless.

But the pact of Olney, after all, proved useless. Before that fateful year closed, the gallant English king was dead. Alfred and his hero race, with the exception of Ethelred, were but short-lived; and the excitement and ceaseless labours and fighting of the past months had worn out what was probably a feeble constitution. The ancient minster of Glastonbury received the remains of Edmund Ironside, which were brought from his faithful city of London and laid beside the grave of his grandfather, Dunstan's friend, Edgar the Peaceful. "In later times, through all the rebuilding of that wonderful pile, the memory of the hero still lived. Behind the high altar, in his own chapel as a canonised saint, rested the body of Edgar the Peaceful. Before the altar lay the supposed remains of the legendary Arthur and his yet more legendary queen. North and south slept two champions of England, alike in name and glory. On the north side lay Edmund the Magnificent, one of the brother heroes of Brunanburgh, the conqueror of Scot and Cumbrian and Northman, the deliverer of English cities from the heathen yoke. To the south lay his namesake and descendant, as glorious in defeat as in victory, the more than equal rival of the mighty Canute, the man who raised England from the lowest depth of degradation, the guardian whose arm and heart never failed her—Edmund the Ironside." *

The death of king Ethelred, followed to the grave a few months later by his hero-son Edmund Ironside, left England at the mercy of Canute and his Danes. But no period of terror or oppression, as might have been expected, succeeded. The Danish conqueror was no ordinary man.

* Freeman: "The Norman Conquest," ch. v. 6.

Although the son of a long line of pirate chiefs, the Viking spirit in king Canute scarcely outlived his youth. His father, king Swein, was a pagan of the old type, who hated Christianity, who evidently regarded the extirpation of the Christian religion as the great mission of the Northern peoples, and, indeed, died in endeavouring to carry out what he looked on as his destined work; for it will be remembered that he met his death as he was on his way to destroy one of the principal sanctuaries of Christian England, the abbey and religious house of St. Edmundsbury. Canute, on the other hand, when once firmly seated on the English throne, was distinguished as an earnest and devoted Christian sovereign.

Although absolute master of England, the Danish king was determined to base his rule upon the formal acceptation of the English people, and at a great Witan assembled in London he was acknowledged as the lawful sovereign of the island. A few severities, evidently necessary for the peace of the country, marked the beginning of the Danish conqueror's reign. Certain men whose fidelity he had reason to suspect, were put to death or outlawed. The natural heirs of the house of Alfred —the two children of Edmund Ironside— he despatched to his half-brother Olaf, king of Sweden, intending, apparently, that Olaf should quietly kill them; but Olaf, though dreading Canute's power, abhorred the suggested crime, and sent them to the far distant kingdom of Hungary, where they grew up under the care of the saint-king Stephen. One of the children, under the name of Edgar Atheling, played in later years a somewhat distinguished part in the story of England. The other possible claimants to the English crown were also children—Alfred and Edward, the sons of Ethelred the Unready. They were in safe exile at the court of their kinsman, the Duke of the Normans, at Rouen. Edward, afterwards famous as Edward the Confessor, became in later days king of England. Canute further strengthened his claim to the throne, and secured the friendship of his powerful Norman neighbours, by marrying the widow of king Ethelred, Emma, the daughter of the Norman duke Richard Sans Peur.

At an early period of his great reign, king Canute — who had been formally crowned king of England in London—at a Witan held at Oxford, renewed and ratified the laws of Edgar, the well-loved English king. This act marked his firm resolve to rule his kingdom exclusively after the English fashion. The mighty Danish fleet and army he had brought with him to combat Edmund Ironside, he sent back to Denmark, only retaining forty ships, as a nucleus for an English fleet, and a small force of some 3,000 Danish warriors, known as his house-carls, for a permanent body-guard, who served as the nucleus of a standing English army.

Throughout his reign of nineteen years, Canute's conduct and policy were that of a wise and patriotic Englishman rather than of a Danish conqueror. He took up and developed the work of the great kings of the house of Alfred, and the country under his wise rule made enormous strides in wealth and power. The student of his reign is surprised to find how little trace of a conquest is discoverable in the

Danish conqueror's English kingdom. After the death of his native rival Edward Ironside, the true nobility of Canute's character appeared. The Danish king elected to live in England, to make England his home, the seat of his wide

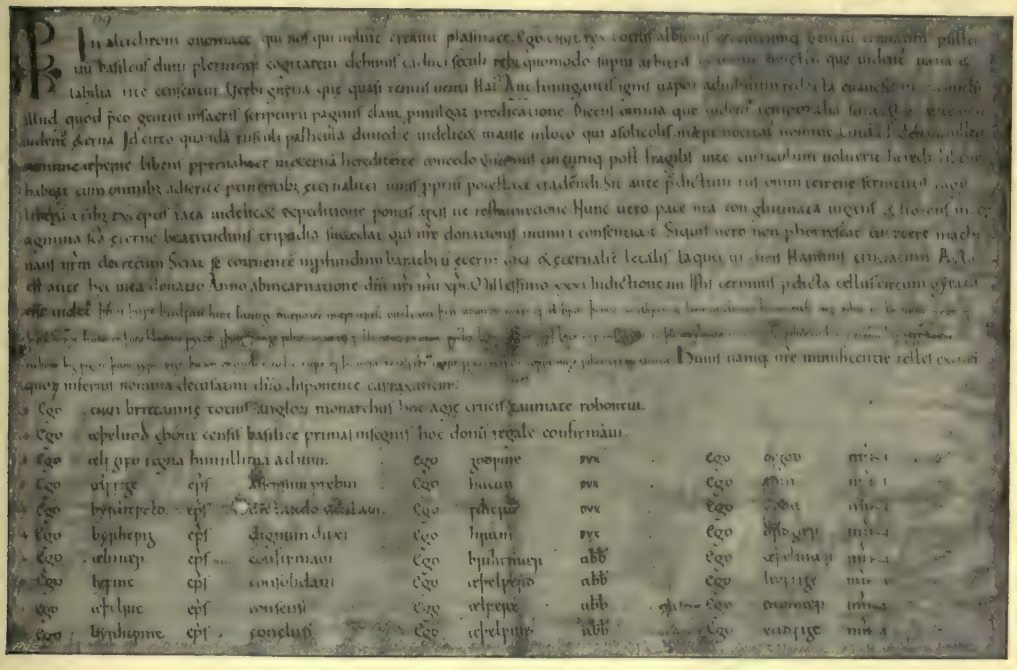
DANISH STIRRUP FOUND IN THE THAMES NEAR BATTERSEA. (*British Museum.*)

dominions, and at the same time determined to become an Englishman to all intents and purposes. He would have men forget here that he was a Dane.

It would seem, at first, that the undisputed accession of a great Danish king to the throne of England marked the complete success of the long struggle of the pagan Northman to win the country, and to stamp out, at least here, the religion of the Crucified, so hated by the Viking spirit. But instead of destroying Christianity in the north, the triumph of Canute really strengthened it, as we shall see, in lands where hitherto paganism still prevailed. Had the Dane won England a century before, when Alfred was waging his life and death struggle with the Viking Guthrun, English Christianity would indeed have been in some danger of extermination ; but what was possible a hundred years before, was impossible when Canute became sole king in England. The long-drawn-out Danish wars, the wise government of the kings of the house of Alfred, had awakened a national feeling which nothing could undo. Still more, the work of the Church of England had succeeded in welding into one great nation the various kingdoms and peoples whose jealousies and divisions had once so materially assisted the Viking raids and settlements. Under the rule of ministers like archbishop Dunstan, the Jute of Kent, the West Saxon on the Severn and the Avon, the East Saxon of London and Bury, the Engle of Lichfield and York, were closely knit together ; they had the same interests, the same hopes, the same training. All this was clearly seen by the wise Danish king Canute, and he quickly became an Englishman among Englishmen, a Christian among a Christian people.

Then, too, in his broad Danish dominions the old period of wandering was over for the Scandinavian peoples themselves. Their own revolutions had transformed the petty realms of the north also into great monarchies. The result of their long and destructive raids upon the Frankish peoples, had been the establishment of a powerful and settled dominion

in the north of France, under the name of the Norman duchy. Thus the result of the Danish conquest of England was not to establish a Scandinavian kingdom in the island, but rather to strengthen the Anglo-Saxon Christian power, and to make it paramount in the north; not to the north of Europe. Thus the apparent victors in the long and bloody strife were really the vanquished. The Danish kingdom of Canute in England, and the mighty Danish realm in Normandy, became the most prominent and successful Christian nations of Europe.



CHARTER OF CNUT (CANUTE) A.D. 1031.

Witnessed by Aethelnoth, Archbishop of York; Ælfgifu (Emma), the Queen; Earl Godwine, and many Bishops, Abbots, Earls, and Thanes. (*British Museum.*)

destroy Christianity in England, but rather to destroy paganism in the whole of the northern or Viking kingdoms. Under Canute we find English bishops and English missionaries active and successful in spreading Christianity over the length and breadth of the northern realm. His victory and complete success finished the long and terrible pagan efforts to root out the religion of Jesus in

The nineteen years of Canute's reign were years of an almost unbroken quiet. Within the English border no record has reached us of any disturbance. One Scottish invasion, and one English invasion of Wales, make up all the story of wars within the limits of the island. The result of the border warfare was, however, important. Malcolm, the Scottish king, agreed to recognise the supremacy of the

English sovereign, and as part of the political arrangement with Canute, the northern half of the old realm of Northumbria, including Lothian, became henceforth part of the Scottish realm, and Edinburgh was chosen as the usual royal Scottish residence. In the north, in the kingdoms claimed by Canute, we hear of several short wars and insurrections; but during most of his reign the English king was the acknowledged master of Denmark and Norway, and for the later years of his life absolute peace reigned in those turbulent countries.

The administration of England was little altered from the arrangements sanctioned by the kings of the house of Alfred. Four great governments divided the realm. These answered to the four most powerful and permanent among the ancient kingdoms—Northumberland, Mercia, East Anglia, and Wessex. Their governors were known as earls, a title which now supplanted the more ancient name of aldermen. But these great officials were evidently more really subject to Canute than to any of his Anglo-Saxon predecessors. Before the times of the Danish king, Wessex and the south had been more immediately under the direct government of the kings themselves than the other three great divisions. Alfred and his children belonged to the old royal house of Wessex; hence the retention of Wessex under the more direct rule of the princes of their ancient house. After he had become the acknowledged king of all England, Canute conferred the earldom of Wessex on his best beloved minister and adviser, the famous Godwin.

The long and almost unbroken peace during the nineteen years of the reign of the great Dane, the universal respect and consideration which England, as the central and most important division of the wide empire of Canute, enjoyed, gave an extraordinary and rapid development to English commerce. For the first time for more than a hundred years, the Viking raiders were no longer dreaded. We hear of the growing importance and increasing wealth of many of the older cities, such as Chester and Gloucester, York and Lincoln; while the needs of this rapidly-expanding commerce were the occasion of the foundation or at least of the extension of comparatively new centres, such as Oxford and Bristol. The greatness and wealth of London, already alluded to, become more noticeable as the reign advanced. The riches and importance of London in the early part of the eleventh century can partly be gauged from the proportion which the city paid of a Danegelt levied in the first year of Canute's reign. The amount imposed upon the whole of England was seventy-two thousand pounds, and of this sum London paid ten thousand five hundred pounds, about one-seventh of the entire amount.

The name of Godwin has been mentioned as the favourite minister and adviser of the Danish reign. A thane of West Saxon blood, tradition ascribes his rise entirely to royal favour, and represents him as springing originally from a humble origin. This remarkable man, who after the sovereign occupied the most prominent position in England during the reigns of Canute and his sons and of Edward the Confessor, has been well styled as one who, never a king himself, was the maker, the

kinsman, the father of kings. Very early in Canute's reign we find this Godwin occupying high office. His valour in war, prudence in counsel, diligence in business, his commanding eloquence and winning manner, won him the friendship and confidence of the far-seeing Danish conqueror, who advanced him rapidly from post to post till he became the chief minister of the reign and earl of Wessex, the wealthiest and most influential division of the kingdom. Through the favour of the monarch, earl Godwin obtained the hand of Gytha, the sister of the Danish earl Ulf, the husband of Canute's sister Estrith. Gytha was descended from one of the more famous heroes of the north, Thorgils, whom tradition speaks of as the grandson of a bear. The children of Godwin and Gytha played the most distinguished parts in the story of England before the Norman Conquest, and Harold, the most celebrated of this band of Godwin's heroic sons, will be ever memorable in the annals of our country as the last of the Anglo-Saxon kings.

When Canute died in A.D. 1035, the great northern empire he had built up at once fell to pieces. Sweden and Norway were divided again, and England once more ceased for a time to be one nation. Neither of Canute's sons inherited their father's conspicuous ability. The elder one, Harold Harefoot, so named from his remarkable swiftness in running—the son of Canute and his first wife, to whom he was never legitimately married—became king of Mercia, Northumbria, and East Anglia. Harthacanute succeeded to Denmark, and, through the influence of earl Godwin, for a time retained Wessex. Swein, the brother of Harold Harefoot, succeeded to the crown of Norway.

Harthacanute's affections seem to have been altogether given to his northern realm of Denmark, and no persuasion on the part of earl Godwin and his Wessex subjects could persuade him to show himself in England. Popular feeling at last brought about a bloodless revolution, and after some two years we read the following entry in the "Abingdon" and "Worcester" Chronicles, which tell the story of the quiet revolt:—"They chose Harold (Harefoot) to be king over all (England), and forsook Harthacanute, for that he was too long in Denmark."

The election of Harold Harefoot was the formal act of the Witan of Wessex; but he seems to have attracted neither love nor devotion, and some of the accounts of his short, uneventful reign represent him as a careless, godless king. One dark story certainly disfigures his reign. Alfred, the son of Ethelred and Emma, made an attempt to invade England. He was taken prisoner, and barbarously tortured and put to death. Godwin was accused of instigating this cruel act, but afterwards was formally acquitted of any share in the deed by the Witan of England. Harold Harefoot died at Oxford after a short reign, in 1040.

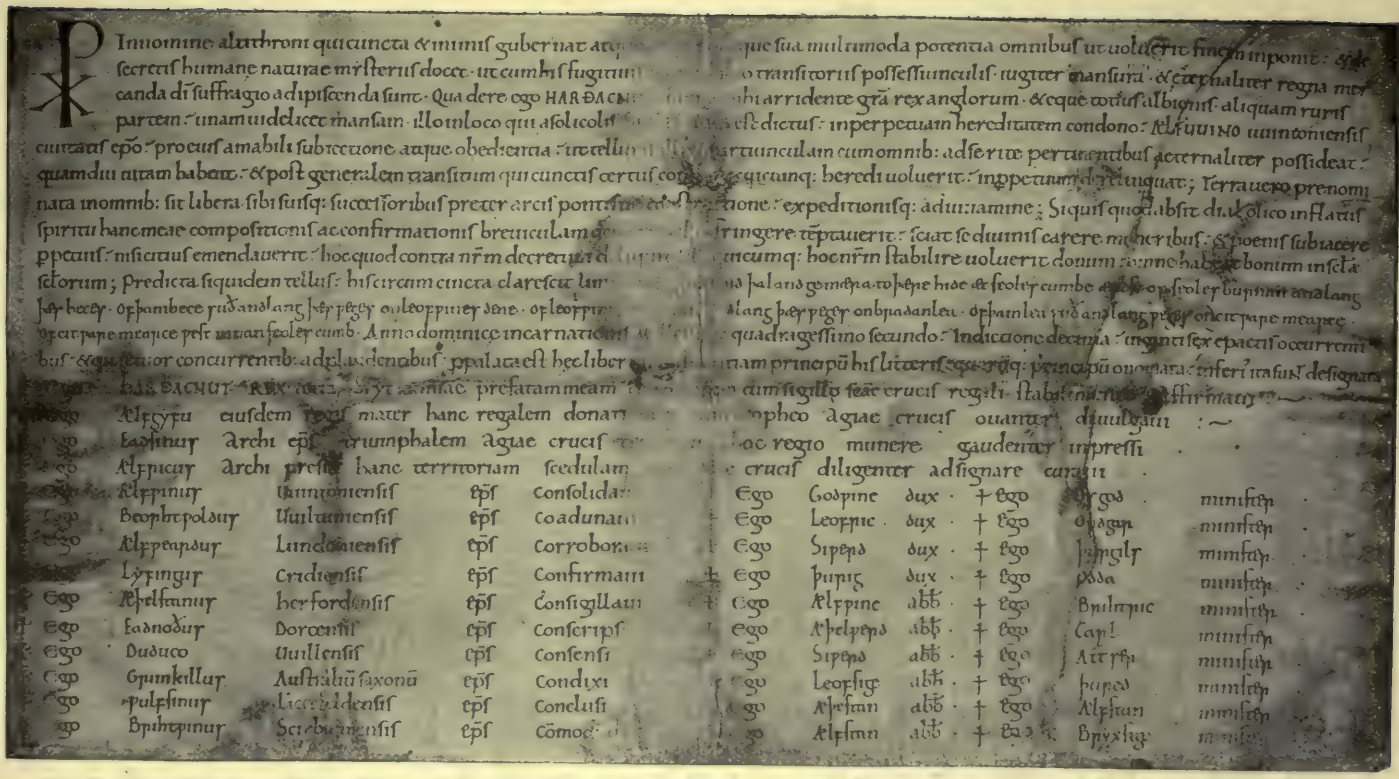
His brother Harthacanute, king of Denmark, who was far from acquiescing in his deposition from the Wessex throne, when the news of his brother Harold's death reached him, was busy preparing for an invasion of England in order to secure his rights. On his half-brother's

death he was chosen at once to succeed him. But his short reign was absolutely eventless; it has been well described as that of one worthless youth following another equally worthless. His first act was an act of senseless brutality towards the dead body of his half-brother Harold. The body was exhumed, decapitated, and then tossed into the Thames. The remains were subsequently brought up by a fisherman, and re-interred, tradition says, by some of the Danish inhabitants of London, in their cemetery, situated outside London, surrounding the site of the present St. Clement Dane's church. The few events recorded in Harthacanute's reign represent him as a cruel, revengeful, self-indulgent tyrant. His failing health and the fact of his being childless induced him to send for his half-brother Edward from Rouen, with a view to the future succession to the crown. We hear of Edward living, during the short period which remained of Harthacanute's reign, in great honour at his brother's court.

The end came more quickly than was expected. The young Danish king died in a way—as has been quaintly described—most befitting a prince whose chief recorded merit was that he provided his courtiers with four meals a day. The king was at Lambeth, in the house of Osgod Clapa, one of the most influential men of the day, on the occasion of Osgod's daughter Githa's marriage to Tofig, the proud and powerful Danish thane who was standard-bearer to the king. In the course of the state banquet, as Harthacanute rose to propose the bride's health, he fell to the ground in a fit, accompanied with frightful struggles. The Chronicles tersely relate the tragic scene thus:—"This year (A.D. 1042) died Harthacanute as he at his drink stood." He was buried in the old minster in the royal city of Winchester. The Chronicles tell of the immediate succession of his half-brother Edward thus:—"Before the king was buried, all folk chose Edward as king in London."

Thus within seven years the four children of Canute had passed away—Harold Harefoot, Swein (who had died shortly before), Harthacanute, and Gunhild, their sister. All died childless save Gunhild, the wife of the German Henry III., whose only child became a nun; and thus once more the crown of England rested on the brows of an heir of the West Saxon house of Cerdic, a direct descendant of Alfred; for Edward, the new king of England, known in history as the "Confessor," was the son of the Saxon king Ethelred and Emma, the Norman princess. With Edward the Confessor (A.D. 1042) commences a new era in the story of England.

During the twenty-six years of the rule of the Danish line in England—in the reigns of Canute and his two sons—no great churchman arose in England. Neither Lyfing, who crowned Canute, nor his successor in the arch-see of Canterbury, Ethelnoth the Good, were in any sense distinguished for great ability or originality. Plain, honest, God-fearing men—especially the latter Ethelnoth—they did their duty quietly and unostentatiously, carrying on the great traditions of the school of Dunstan. Their chief title to honour was the quiet



GRANT OF LAND AT CHILCOMBE BY KING HARTHACNUT (HARTHACANUTE) TO ÆLFWINE, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, A.D. 1042.

Witnessed by Ælfgyfu (Emma), the Mother of the King; Eadsin (Eadsige), Archbishop of Canterbury; Ælfric, Archbishop of York; Ælfwine, Bishop of Winchester; Beorhtwold of Wilton, Ælfweard of London, Lyfing of Crediton, Æthelstan of Hereford, Eadnoth of Dorchester, Duduco of Wells, Grimkill of the South Saxons, Wulfsin of Lichfield, Brihtwine of Sherborne, Earl Godwine, Earl Leofric, Earl Siward, Abbots, and Thanes. (*British Museum.*)

influence for good they undoubtedly exercised over the great Danish conqueror Canute.

The character of Canute is one of the most interesting in early English history. The descendant of a line of pirate kings and chieftains, we find him in the early years of his eventful career at the head of a great fleet and army of Vikings, carrying out the dread traditions of his race only too faithfully, plundering, burning, destroying ruthlessly. Then, no sooner had he obtained all and more than all his ambition could ever have allowed him to dream of, when seated firmly on the throne of England, backed up with all the mighty power of the north, the Viking warrior changed at once into the wise and patriotic prince, second to none of those great men of the house of Alfred who had succeeded in making a united and prosperous England.

And what was perhaps strangest of all, we find the Viking chief quietly putting aside the pagan traditions of his race, and during the nineteen years of his beneficent reign adopting the maxims of the Christian faith, and living up to them in the reality of his private life, as well as in the open publicity of his state life. That wise statesmanship which induced Canute to become an Englishman—in all the best sense of the word—among Englishmen, might perhaps have led him to adopt the religion as well as the manners and customs and laws of the people over whom he found himself called to rule; but no mere statecraft would have evoked the writings we possess from his hand, or supplied the motives of the intensely religious acts which illustrate the career of the great Danish king of England. No student of his life can for one moment doubt that he became an earnest Christian from conviction.

Nor can we hesitate to assert that it was the spirit of the Church of England which so powerfully influenced the heart of Canute, and brought about the great change in his character. The church of Dunstan, Canute found, was a real and living power in the land he came quickly to love so well, and his acute genius was not slow to perceive what was its work and influence among the people of England. The king of Denmark compared it with the paganism of the north, and, recognising its power and influence for good, adopted it as his own religion, and for ever swept away the long-cherished Viking idea of destroying Christianity and substituting paganism in its place.

The relations between the Church of England and the state, in the days of the great kings of the house of Alfred, of Canute, and of Edward the Confessor, who may be looked upon as Canute's immediate successor, were close and intimate. The period in question to which we allude extends from the middle of the ninth century to the middle of the eleventh century—some 200 years. We have already had several occasions to mention the constant presence in the Witan, or great council of the nation, of the archbishops, bishops, and certain abbots of important houses. The archbishop, and in not a few cases the bishop, was the chosen adviser of the king; and in the case of archbishop Dunstan, he was *the minister* of a great reign like that of

Edgar, stretching over many years. Indeed, that most able prelate (Dunstan) had positively identified with the office of primate the position of standing counsellor of the realm, in other words, of the king's chief minister.

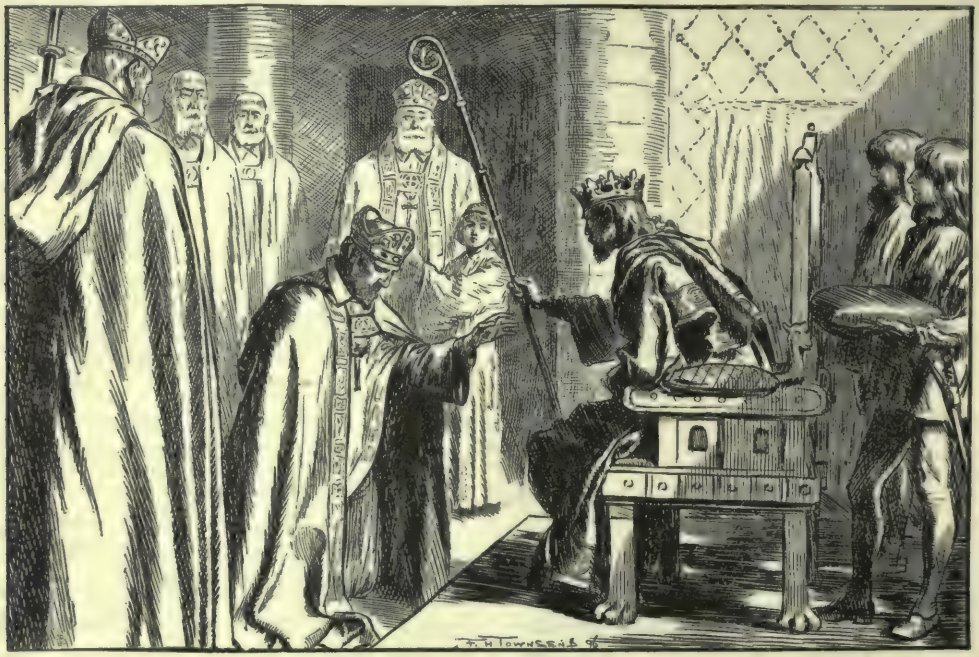
This extraordinary position of power in the state, after Dunstan's disappearance from public affairs, seems to have been much modified; and we do not find, as a rule, the primate again occupying the position of chief minister. Under Canute he did not occupy the position filled by Dunstan, but the more natural one of a royal counsellor whenever the privileges of the Church or the relation of the Church to the liberties of the people were in question. But at the same time (in the days of Canute) a new and close connection between the church and state grew up in the "cabinet" of the king himself, and which had great ultimate consequences—consequences stretching, in fact, over centuries. A staff of secretaries was formed for carrying out all the details of government, arranged, in the first instance, by the king and his lay-advisers. These secretaries were ecclesiastics. Their number has been given as twelve, and among them were to be found certain foreigners, no doubt trusted with foreign affairs; but usually the majority were Englishmen, men of marked ability, whose reward, in most cases, in the long run, was an episcopal see. We notice this especially in the reigns of Canute and Edward the Confessor. Under the Conqueror the clerks of the king's chapel or chancery are even more prominent in the administration of public affairs, and we find these more frequently becoming bishops. Hence the marked political character of the English episcopate, and its close connection with the sovereign. This peculiar state of things went on from Canute's days to the Reformation.

The power of the sovereign in the appointment of bishops is clear. In earlier times these appointments were spoken of somewhat vaguely: now as the result of the choice of the clergy and the people, now as proceeding from the absolute will of the sovereign. Under Canute and his successors, however, the will of the king was notified in a more imperious manner; and by them the practice of investiture by the ring and crozier seems to have been introduced. No mention *ever* appears of any interference on the part of the Pope. His part in these episcopal appointments was strictly confined to the bestowal of a pall upon the archbishops, and this dignity was of course bestowed *after* the appointment had been definitely made.

When a prelate of commanding intellect and vigour lived, his influence was paramount in the church; but in times when such a great personality was not at its head, the king exercised the chief influence; and when the monarch was, as we find usually to have been the case in the house of Alfred, at once able and religious, his will and mind were stamped upon the laws and regulations and general administration of the church. These commanding influences of the bishop and the king seem to have alternated. In early days, the mind and will of Theodore of Canterbury, Aldhelm of Sherborne, Wilfrid and Egbert in York, and in the later days of Dunstan of Canterbury, was stamped

upon the church of their times; and the effect of their influence was felt long after they had passed away. Sovereigns, like Alfred and Canute, in their day, however, towered high above any ecclesiastic, and their influence in the contemporary Church of England was absolutely paramount in its turn.*

Church of England." Something more was required in a king before he could exercise this strange spiritual power, so potent in its after-effects on our great church, than merely acute and far-seeing statesmanship, which saw in the church a great and matchless power of usefulness. To exercise such spiritual power, he must



INVESTITURE OF A SAXON BISHOP.

It seems incredible that a child of the pagan Vikings like Canute, himself in early life a Viking chief, should ever have come to rank among the more prominent religious Anglo-Saxon kings, who helped by their life and work to "make the

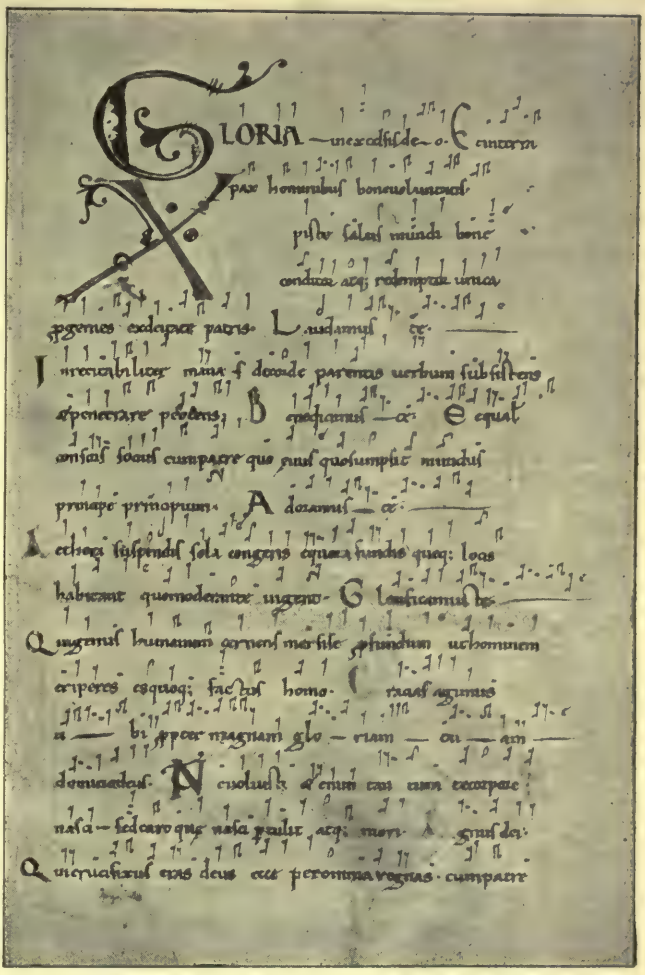
have been an intense believer in the religion of which the church was the earthly exponent. Such an one was Alfred, and, in a degree, perhaps, such an one was Canute also. No one who has studied contemporary documents, such as the "Encomium of Emma," or the striking letter of king Canute to his people and the church after his Roman pilgrimage, or has pondered over Canute's quiet

* See generally Bishop Stubbs: "Constitutional History," chap. vi. and chap. xix., etc. Freeman: "Norman Conquest," chap. viii. and appendix i. (vol. ii.), etc. Green: "Conquest of England," chap. vii. and chap. ix.

ILLUMINATION FROM AN 8TH CENTURY PSALTER OF ST AUGUSTINE
IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

church work at St. Edmundsbury, on the bloody hill of Assandun, or at Canterbury, Ely, and Romsey, or in his native Denmark, can for a moment doubt the intense reality of the Christianity of our Viking-descended king. A few details will be specially interesting not only as throwing light upon that inner life of one of our noblest Christian princes, who must be ever regarded as one of the "makers" of our church, but as picturing vividly something of public church life, with its errors and its earnestness, in the early years of the eleventh century.

"The Encomium of Emma," twice queen of England as successively the wife of Ethelred and of Canute, and mother of two kings, Harthacanute and Edward the Confessor, as a contemporary writing is of great importance, although the writer was often prejudiced in his statements. In this curious and interesting composition the writer thus describes Canute's conduct at St. Omer in the course of his Roman pilgrimage. It gives a good idea of the great king's inner life when he was at the height of his power.



PAGE FROM A BOOK OF LATIN HYMNS IN MUSICAL NOTATION WITHOUT LINES, TENTH CENTURY. (*British Museum.*)

"Entering the monasteries, where he was received with great honour, he (Canute) walked humbly, fixing his eyes upon the ground with wonderful reverence, and pouring out—if I may say so—rivers of tears, he implored the aid of the saints. But when the moment had arrived when he was to present his gifts upon the altar, how often did he impress the pavement with his kisses, how often did he strike

his venerable breast! What sighs, what prayers, that he might not be found unworthy of the mercy of the Supreme! At length his attendants stretched forth his munificent oblation, which the king himself placed on the altar. But why do I say *the* altar, when I remember that I myself saw him go round every part of the monasteries, and pass no altar, however small, on which he did not leave a present, and which he did not salute? Then came the poor, and they were all separately relieved. These and other bounties of the Lord Canute, O St. Omer and St. Bertin, I myself beheld in your monasteries; for which do you pray that such a king may live in the heavenly habitations, as your servants the canons and the monks are daily petitioning."

About the year 1027 Canute went on this pilgrimage to Rome. Subsequently he addressed a letter to the metropolitan Ethelnoth, and others whom he named, and to the whole nation of the English. Such a pilgrimage was an ordinary and favourite piece of devotion in those days, but evidently with Canute it was something more. His whole soul was stirred within him at the sight of the sacred shrines and their deathless memories. He pours out his whole heart in this celebrated letter to the nation, which has been well compared to that of an absent father writing to his children, whose love he felt he possessed and deserved. The letter begins thus: "Canute, King of all England and of Denmark, Norway, etc., to Ethelnoth metropolitan, and Alfric, archbishop of York, and to all the bishops and prelates and to the whole nation of the English—greeting. I notify to you that I have lately taken a journey to Rome to pray for the forgiveness of my sins, and for the welfare of my dominions . . . I now return most humble thanks to my God Almighty for suffering me in my lifetime to visit the sanctuary of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and all others that I could find either within or without the city of Rome, and these in person I reverentially worshipped according to my desire. This I have performed chiefly because I learnt from wise men that St. Peter the apostle has received from God great power in binding and in loosing, and that he carries the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and therefore I esteemed it very profitable to seek his special patronage with the Lord."

It is clear from this passage that in the Anglo-Saxon church were taught some of the unscriptural doctrines especially condemned by the Reformation teachers of the sixteenth century: notably the invocation of saints such as St. Peter, whose special patronage—a curious way of putting it—Canute desired with the Lord. After dwelling at some length upon his reception by the chiefs of continental Christendom, the Pope and the emperor, and after describing the honours and presents with which he was loaded by these potentates, and how he had obtained from them privileges and exemption from dues for future English pilgrims as well as for traders and merchants, the king goes on to speak for himself in the following striking words—peculiarly striking when it is remembered *who* was the writer, what had been his early training and the immemorial traditions of his wild, fierce race; how enormous, too, was his present power as

the undisputed king of England and the north :—

"I have vowed," wrote Canute, "to amend my life in all respects, and to rule the kingdoms and the people subject to me with justice and clemency; . . . and if, through the intemperance of youth or negligence, I have hitherto exceeded the bounds of justice in any of my acts, I intend by God's aid to make an entire change for the better. I therefore adjure and command my counsellors to whom I have entrusted the affairs of my kingdom, that they suffer no injustice to prevail, either through fear of me or from favour to any powerful person." He then proceeded to charge all sheriffs and magistrates on their allegiance to treat high and low, rich and poor, with absolute impartiality, and that neither for regard to royal favour, or for respect of the great, or for the sake of money, was this rigid impartiality ever to be departed from.

A long passage follows, promising the blessings of peace with all surrounding nations, so that England in the future would have nothing to fear from war or hostilities from any quarter. What a promise from the great descendant of the Vikings! But the promise was faithfully kept, and England long enjoyed the blessings of the profound peace Canute spoke of, to which for so many long years the land had been a stranger. The last part of the "Letter to the English Nation" was occupied with a strict injunction to the bishops and governors of the kingdom to take care that all church dues were punctually paid—"all dues belonging to God, tithes, the pence due to St. Peter at Rome, the first-fruits payable to every one's parish church." Canute's "Letter to the English Nation" was a writing in some respects worthy of being ascribed to Alfred, or in later days to a sovereign like St. Louis of France.*

The laws of king Canute repeat in religious matters much of the legislation of the kings of the house of Alfred; and the same devout spirit which lived in every line of the remarkable "Letter to the Nation" we have just been dwelling on, inspired much of the laws, and even seems to have dictated some of the very language in which they are written down. They open with the precept charging men to fear God and honour the king. "First above all things are men ever to love and worship one God, and with one mind to hold one Christendom, and with right truthfulness to love king Canute." The laws themselves, as we have said, repeat much of the legislation of Canute's great predecessors, and deal with the reformation of manners, the administration of justice, the strict discharge of all ecclesiastical duties on the side of the priests, and the strict payment of all ecclesiastical dues on the part of the laymen. Again the observance of the Lord's day is earnestly pressed. On that day no popular assembly is to be held; there is to be no market, no hunting. *Heathen superstitions* are all to be given up—a strange insertion in the law-code of one who was in his youth a pirate chief, and the descendant of a long line of pagan Vikings! The traffic in slaves is also denounced. All English rights and customs are rigidly preserved in

* See Hook: "Lives of the Archbishops," vol. i., chap. vii. Freeman: "Norman Conquest," chap. vi.

the code of the Danish king. We find bishop and alderman associated as before as presidents of the shire-assemblies; the "alderman" in the later clauses, however, becomes the "earl." The bishop and earl are to be joint expounders of all laws, ecclesiastical and civil. The feasts of the two new national saints are specially mentioned, and men are enjoined to keep holy the day of the boy-martyr Edward and the day of the statesman-archbishop Dunstan.

But not only have the laws and some of the public utterances of this great king, who was also a great churchman, come down to us; the stories of not a few quiet unostentatious acts, done for the love of God, serve also to make the memory of Canute a loved one in our church annals.

SCANDINAVIAN BROOCHES. (*British Museum.*)

In the fifth year of his reign, when all was quiet at home, and no serious claimant or discontented subject threatened his thrones, either in England or in his northern realm of Denmark, with solemn rites was consecrated the stone church king Canute had built on the hill of Essex (Assandun), in memory of his great victory over the gallant Edmund Ironside. "It was reared as the hallowing of his victory, as the atonement for his earlier crimes."* It was, perhaps, the first of the many churches of "expiation," which only a few years later began to be built and endowed in sorrowful memory of a great nation's wrong; the dark shadow of which, very soon after king Canute passed away, began to creep over Canute's prosperous England. The "priest" of the new church of Assandun was the friend and chaplain of Canute, and in after-years this priest rose to great eminence in the church and state. The memory of Stigand of Assandun will be ever cherished and reverenced by Englishmen, as that of the last of the Anglo-Saxons who was to occupy the seat of Augustine in the proud minster of Canterbury.

The stone church of Assandun, consecrated in 1020, was only the first of a long list of ecclesiastical foundations of the Danish Canute. A restoration on a very large scale was undertaken and carried out, of all churches, monasteries, and abbeys which had suffered during his own or his father Swein's wars. Among these numerous works was the refounding as well as the rebuilding of the famous religious house and abbey of St. Edmundsbury, erected and endowed in memory of the East Anglian king who had suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Danes in the invasion of Ivar and Hubbo before the days of

* Freeman.

Alfred. This house of St. Edmund had been especially the object of king Swein's destructive hatred; and the mysterious story, alluded to already, of Swein's death in the Viking camp at Gainsborough, is closely connected with the supposed anger of the offended saint. Canute was especially anxious to make every possible amends to this well-loved Anglo-Saxon hero. The minster was rebuilt; but the foundation being changed in accordance with the views of the Church of England at the beginning of the eleventh century, an abbot and monks replaced the secular canons of the older house. In the important monasteries of the Fen districts in the east of England, the generosity and religious zeal of Canute were peculiarly marked. Ely and Ramsey both owed him much.

Nor was Canute's earnestness on behalf of the Christian faith confined to his English dominions. In Denmark he also showed himself a zealous supporter of Christianity. Several new bishops were appointed for the still struggling church in this last home of a dying paganism. Some of these were Englishmen. We hear of bishops in Funen, Zealand, and Scania, for instance; in Roeskilde, near Lethra, the old royal seat of the Danish kings, an English bishop consecrated by an English primate carried on the work of the once hated religion of Jesus, among the time-honoured sanctuaries of the old paganism of the north.

The ardent zeal of Canute for Christianity was shared by queen Emma his wife —the daughter of the Norman house of Rollo—who evidently had inherited that intense love for the Christian religion

CNUT (CANUTE) AND ÆLFGYFU (EMMA) MAKING A DONATION TO NEW MINSTER.
From an Early Eleventh Century MS. (*British Museum.*)

which distinguished the great dames of her illustrious house. Her devotion to the two monasteries of the royal city of Winchester is well known. Nor was the splendid bounty of king Canute and his Norman queen confined to England and Denmark. Among many generous gifts of the mighty Danish king to churches on the continent of Europe, his donations to the famous church of Chartres deserve

special notice, while his queen Emma bore a very considerable share in rebuilding the minster of St. Hilary of Poictiers, where much of her work still remains.

The state visit of Canute to Glastonbury, in company with archbishop Ethelnoth, who, in common with so many of the archbishops and distinguished ecclesiastics, was connected with the school and religious house of that time-honoured sanctuary, is historical. Canute formally confirmed every gift and privilege which his English predecessors on the throne had granted to the famous Celtic sanctuary. The object of this state visit of the Danish conqueror to Glastonbury, was to do honour to the tomb in which slept his great rival, king Edmund Ironside. There, in front of the high altar of Dunstan's minster of stone, which had replaced the yet older wooden basilica, the scene of so many immemorial traditions of England and the yet older Britain, Canute knelt and prayed; and the story tells us how he covered the new tomb of the noble hero-king—once his bitterest foe—with a gorgeous robe, bright with the many-coloured embroidery of skilful English workwomen, for which the island was then, and for long after that day, especially celebrated.

One more of these acts of piety and devotion, which formed so prominent a feature in Canute's life and work in England, must be recorded. The body of the martyred Alphege (Elfheah), who had been so cruelly murdered by the Danes at Greenwich in the wars of Ethelred, was solemnly translated from St. Paul's cathedral in London—where the remains, it will be remembered, had in the first instance been interred—to his metropolitan church of Canterbury. In this solemn work of expiation king Canute personally assisted, and with him on that memorable day, when paganism, in the person of the greatest Danish sovereign who ever lived, made sorrowful reparation for one of the memorable Viking crimes, were his queen and their boy Harthacanute, afterwards king of England.

COMB-CASE OF SCANDINAVIAN TYPE FOUND AT LINCOLN. (*British Museum.*)

CHAPTER XXII.

THE NORMANS.

England Normanised by Edward—The Viking Rollo, Founder of the Norman Realm—Rouen—Extent of His Dominions—Normandy a Christian State—Guillaume of the Long Sword—Richard the Fearless—Richard the Good—The Normans in Italy—Robert le Diable—William the Conqueror—His Marriage with Matilda—Friendship with Lanfranc—Strength of the Normans—Vestiges of Paganism in their Character.

WHEN king Harthacanute, the son of Canute, fell stricken with a mortal sickness "as he at his drink stood" at the marriage feast of Osgod Clapa, and thus made room for his young kinsman Edward, surnamed the Confessor, a new spirit came over England. The new monarch was intensely religious, and history is too ready to smile at the "monk-king," as he is not inaptly often called; too ready to deride his influence; too ready to look on him as a monkish visionary, occupied with thoughts and aspirations belonging rather to a cloistered monk than to the occupant of a mighty throne. But Edward the Confessor was certainly more than a mere monkish visionary; he had a settled purpose in his mind all through his generally quiet reign. He determined, with a dogged determination, to "Normanise" his England; and from his point of view his reign was on the whole successful, for he so far changed his country as to render possible the Norman Conquest, which followed hard upon his death. It must be remembered that with rare exceptions the kings of the house of Alfred were most able men and successful sovereigns. Edward the Confessor was certainly not one of the few exceptions, but most distinctly an able man, and—as we have said—from his point of view, a successful sovereign.

He it was who prepared the way for a great and momentous change in England. From the day of his accession, Anglo-Saxon England became gradually Norman England. The Anglo-Saxon Church of England became, for good or for evil, the Norman Church of England. It is not the historian's province to discuss whether this change in the church from the spirit of Dunstan and Elfric to that of Lanfranc and Anselm was, in truth, for good or evil as regards the English church: we have simply and truthfully to tell the story of how the momentous change came about. But in telling that story we must first very briefly set forth *who these Normans were*, and what had been their history, who in the eleventh and twelfth centuries exercised so vast an influence in Europe; whose conquest of England worked so great a change in the manners, customs, views and doctrines of the Anglo-Saxon peoples; and whose history, from the year of the accession of Edward the Confessor,

becomes inseparably interwoven with that of our own country.

It was early in the last quarter of the ninth century, when Alfred was king, that we first hear of Rollo, the founder of the famous Norman realm. The son of a Norwegian petty king or chieftain, Rollo, driven by some bloody family feud from his northern home, sought his fortune abroad, and, as a Viking commander, for some thirty or forty years roamed the northern seas. With varying fortunes, at the head of a wild band of sea-pirates—sometimes large, sometimes comparatively few in number—he harried with his black ships many a fair and prosperous district, now in England, but more often in France. While still in the prime of life, the great sea-rover dreamed of founding a permanent settlement. He chose for his home the banks of the Seine, and the rich country which the Seine waters, and he made the seat of his government the once flourishing city of Rouen. It was a country impoverished by many cruel raids; it was a city half in ruins, of which Rollo the Viking took possession, and to which he acquired a sort of legal right by the terms of a somewhat vague treaty which he made with the king of the Franks, Charles the Simple.

After Rollo and his Vikings had taken possession of his new home, follows the romantic and marvellous story of the sea-king's life at Rouen. A quarter of a century spent in sailing the wild northern seas as a pirate, living a life disfigured by innumerable deeds of cruelty and wrong done to helpless monasteries and quiet villages and farms, and filled with burning and plundering and slaying, would seem a curious preparation for one who was to organise the government of a new settlement, and to lay the strong groundwork of a realm destined in a few short years mightily to influence the history of the world. Yet, strange to say, this is what Rollo the northern pirate did in Rouen and on the Seine banks, between the years 911 and 927. Although still vigorous, he must have been more than sixty years old when he began the strange work of organising his Norman settlement in France.

The country originally ceded to him by the Frankish king Charles the Simple, and which was only slightly increased in after-years, may be said roughly to have included that portion of France we now know as Normandy, and parts of Brittany. Maine was a later annexation. Rollo had six successors in Rouen before the great Conquest of England in A.D. 1066, four of whom were certainly men of unusual genius and skill. What Rollo began, the famous dukes of Normandy, as they were usually called, went on with; treading in their great ancestor's footsteps, and developing the strong, firm government, the respect, and even devotion to the Christian faith, the love for order and law, which were evidently the characteristics of Rollo after he ceased to be a sea-rover, and had settled down into the life of a ruler of an industrious colony. We watch with some surprise the gradual but rapid development of the work of Rollo and his successors, which went on chiefly whilst the kings of the house of Alfred were reigning in England. Rollo and his descendants were ruling in Rouen and Bayeux when Alfred,

Athelstan, and Edgar were kings in England; and Canute's beneficent reign was contemporary with the most splendid era of the government of Rollo's children in Normandy. Gradually along the Seine banks, in the Rouen and Bayeux districts, even in more distant Brittany, we see the old ruined religious houses rising from their ashes; we see a powerful Christian church making its influence more and more felt; we watch the gradual welding together of the Danish conquerors and the old dwellers in the land, which produced the Norman; till in the time of Edward the Confessor Normandy had become famous throughout western Christendom. It was famous as much for the reckless gallantry of its soldier nobles, as for the exalted devotion of its ecclesiastics; famous, too, for its new school

THE STONE CORN-CHEST AT FÉCAMP.

of architecture, for its lordly minsters, its vast monasteries, its schools, and even for its literature.

Rollo and his son, his grandson, and great-grandson—Guillaume Longue Épée (Long Sword), Richard Sans Peur (The Fearless), and Richard the Good, whose long lives and reigns extended over some hundred and twenty years, were more than nominal Christians. Each of them did much to restore the ruined churches and monasteries of their adopted country. Many singular recitals of the intensely religious impulses which ever and anon affected these chieftains of a people still half pagan, have come down to us. When Rollo lay dying, it is said, terrible memories of his acts in bygone years, when as a pagan Viking he had been the terror of the Frankish coasts, alternated with Christian hopes and onlooks. In the intervals of these disturbing memories, he showed himself the steadfast friend of the church he had once hated and persecuted; and he died, his poet biographer tells us, a devout Christian.

Guillaume Longue Épée (Long Sword), Rollo's son and successor, inherited his father's love for justice and right and order. He adopted the customs and state of the kings of France at his court, encouraging the Romance tongue, identifying himself and his adventure-loving people as much as possible with Frankish interests and feeling; and though still, with good reason, proud of their Norman ancestry and name, his subjects were content to call themselves Franks and Frenchmen, "though Frenchmen on a far nobler and grander scale than other Frenchmen." Christianity made rapid progress among these children of the Vikings; but for more than a hundred years there was ever a strong party among these Normans who clung to the old pagan rites, and perhaps secretly still worshipped Woden and Thor and the fierce Scandinavian gods. In the old city of Bayeux, the centre of the old Danish or heathen party, paganism and its bloody rites lingered long after the rest of Normandy had become Christian.

The Trouveur poet sang the praises of this duke Guillaume, and tells us of his mighty prowess in war, and of his rare personal beauty and winning charm of manner; but in spite of all his earthly success and grandeur, he longed, we read, to throw off his armour and his ducal ornaments, and to exchange them for the monk's cowl and robe. The abbot of Jumièges, one of the restored Seine monasteries, with difficulty persuaded duke Guillaume to retain his royal dignity, telling him, with a true Christian insight only too rare in those days, how he could serve God and his people better on the throne than in the monk's cell. When the Norman chief at last fell, stricken by an assassin, a silver key to a much prized coffer was found on his person, and when the coffer was opened, the monk's cowl and robe were found: they were his most prized treasure. Secretly he had become a monk, but had consented to lay the monk's dress by, on the prayer of the abbot of Jumièges, and to continue to rule over his turbulent subjects.

His son, still a child when Guillaume was murdered, grew up to manhood amidst many perils, and then, under the honoured name of Richard Sans Peur (The Fearless) during a long reign of fifty years,

continuing his father's and grandfather's work, raised his Normandy to the first rank among the Christian powers of Europe. It was this Richard's beautiful daughter Emma, known as the "Gem of Normandy," who married the Anglo-Saxon Ethelred the Unready, and became the mother of Edward the Confessor. In later years, when Ethelred was dead, she married, as we have seen, king Canute; and Hartha-canute, afterwards king of England, was the offspring of this second marriage.

Fifty years of restless, brilliant, busy life, prematurely aged the grandson of Rollo. When scarcely past middle age his health declined, and, worn out before he had reached his sixtieth year, he went to his loved palace and monastery of Fécamp, by the sea, and quietly prepared to die. He gathered his Norman nobles round him, and received their homage for his son, named after himself Richard. He had many other sons; these he commended to the love and care of his eldest born, and very generously did the elder brother carry out his father's wishes. This noble group of boys—Richard Sans Peur's sons — became the founders of great and historic Norman houses, destined in a no distant future to play a great part in our English story; houses which bore the well-known names of Tankervill, Gournay, Gifford, Warren, and Mortimer — names written large, in days to come, on many a stirring page of English history.

Outside the transept of the great abbey church of Fécamp, which Richard had loved so well, and which he had rebuilt with much lavish care, stood a huge stone chest. Every Lord's day this stone chest was filled with the finest wheat corn. The poor of Fécamp were allowed each week to fill from this chest a little measure of grain, to which was added a small dole of money. When the end came, duke Richard was found to have left some curious directions as to his burial. The well-known stone chest, which had held for so long the wheat for the poor, was to be his coffin. The coffin was not to be interred in the walls of the great Fécamp abbey: Richard said he was not worthy to lie within those sacred walls. The stone chest containing his remains was to be interred just beneath the abbey wall, where, through an overhanging spout or gargoyle, the rain of heaven, dropping from the lofty roof of God's house, might ever and anon water the earth which covered his last resting place.

Such memories as these help to show, perhaps more vividly than the dry record of restored monasteries, and of the building or reconstruction of minsters and abbeys, what a powerful influence the religion of Jesus exercised upon these children of the Vikings, the most determined, and certainly the most dangerous foes Christianity has ever met with. When, however, once these Northmen saw the beauty of the Christian teaching, and were convinced of the truth of the Redeemer's words, they became the most ardent supporters and defenders of the faith which once they hated and despised. We have seen what a friend to the church was Canute, the son of the pagan Swein, another of these children of the dreaded Vikings, and how he also equalled, if he did not surpass, the greatest kings of the house of Alfred in his devotion to, and in his work for, the church of Christ.

The son of Richard Sans Peur (The Fearless) was perhaps a more devoted son to the church than even his father and grandfather had been. His ordinary epithet in history is "le bon," but some of the older chroniclers, instead of giving him this surname of "the Good," style him "Richard, the monks' friend" (l'ami des moines), in memory of his devotion to monasticism.

It was during this second Richard's long rule of thirty years that the Norman expeditions to South Italy first began to attract the attention of Europe. This was another of those strange episodes in Norman development which so mightily influenced the early mediæval history of church and state in the West. It was some ten years before the death of duke Richard II. (the date is 1016) that the old spirit of adventure peculiarly belonging to the Vikings of the north, seems again to have been awakened among the Norman-Frenchmen. Invited, in the first instance, by a prince of Salerno in South Italy to assist him in repelling a raid of the Saracens, the first little band of Norman adventurers—free-lances, as they would be termed in later mediæval history—was recruited by fresh and ever fresh companies of Norman wanderers attracted by the wealth and defenceless condition of South Italy. It has been well suggested that the wonderful successes of these Normans in South Italy, may have put into the minds of their countrymen who stayed at home the idea of a yet more important conquest of a country almost visible from their own shores. "When private adventurers like the sons of Tancred of Hauteville grew into sovereigns, what might not be done by the sovereign of Normandy himself, wielding the whole force of the land which gave birth to men like them?" For what was the story of the conquest of Apulia and its historic towns? "A few private Norman adventurers—pilgrims returning from the Holy Land, ... gentlemen of small estate whom the paternal acres could no longer maintain, gradually deprived the Roman empire of the East of the remnant of its western possessions. The sons of Tancred of Hauteville began as Vikings who had changed their element [had exchanged the sea for the land]; they gradually grew into counts, dukes, kings, etc.; and when the first horrors of conquest were over, no conquerors ever deserved better of the conquered. The rule of these Norman freebooters was the one example of really equal and tolerant government which the world could then show."* Under their rule South Italy was at once prosperous and secure. In an incredibly short space of time these Norman adventurers, by their splendid bravery, their skill in negotiation, their marvellous aptitude for government, won for themselves countships, dukedoms, principalities, and kingdoms. The whole of the beautiful south of Italy, and eventually Sicily, with its fair cities, its boundless wealth, gradually became Norman. The strange story of these Norman settlements in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in South Italy and Sicily, reads like a romance.

One illustrious family from the district in Normandy known as "the Cotentin," were distinguished beyond all others of these adventurers from the north—worthy

* Freeman: "Norman Conquest."

descendants indeed of their Viking forefathers! The castle of Hauteville near Coutances, whose beautiful cathedral, built somewhat later by the generous gifts of the Hauteville house, still ranks among the noblest of Norman minsters, furnished in the persons of the sons of Tancred, the seigneur of Hauteville, a marvellous group of Norman counts, dukes, and even kings, who for some two hundred years powerfully influenced the fortunes of southern Europe, including most of the historic lands lying around the Mediterranean Sea. In southern Italy there was but a little stretch of sea which separated the Norman adventurers from Sicily, the fairest island in the world. Sicily then, as now, was the garden of the Mediterranean with its

DEPARTURE OF DUKE ROBERT FOR THE HOLY LAND.

fair cities of Palermo and Messina. The pennons of the Hautevilles of Coutances were not long before they passed over the little silver streak of sea. But in Sicily the Norman *Viking*—for the Hauteville warrior, whether known as Guiscard, Roger, or Bohemond, strangely resembled his

WINDOW OF FALAISE CASTLE
NORMANDY

pirate ancestors—found a doughtier foe than the effeminate Lombard or the degenerate Greek who in central or southern Italy had so quickly submitted to his arms. Across the narrow strait the Norman found the Saracen in possession of, and determined to do battle for, his charmed Sicilian land. Here the fighting was a reality, and lasted many years, but in the end Norman skill and valour prevailed, and the crown of Sicily was added to the long roll of Norman triumphs in southern Europe. In the hour of their proudest triumphs the greatest of the Norman Hautevilles even dreamed of winning and wearing the diadem of the empire of the East, and for a brief season even that superb prize seemed to be within the reach of these daring wanderers. This was not to be, and after a century and a half of brilliant rule the Sicilian Hautevilles, as a family, became extinct, and their kingdom passed into the hands of another race; but the marvellous story of these pirate Normans in the south will never be forgotten.

To return to Normandy proper. On the death of duke Richard II. the extraordinary prosperity of the Norman settlers in the north of France experienced a temporary check. Dissensions and jealousies divided the sons of Richard II. We read of a short war, then of a reconciliation, then of the sudden death of the young duke Richard III. —men said owing to poison administered by his brother Robert at a great feasting in Rouen. The true story will perhaps never be known, but the dark shadow of a crime seemed ever to brood over and cloud the younger brother's life. Without opposition this younger brother Robert became duke of the Normans in a little more than a year after Richard II., "the friend of the monks," was laid to sleep in the royal abbey of Fécamp.

Duke Robert, whom some of the older chroniclers surname the Magnificent, while others style him "le Diable," reigned some six years in Rouen, when he determined to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. It would seem as though remorse for some awful crime—perhaps the remembrance of

his brother's murder—embittered his life and thus induced him thus to leave his duchy and his child-heir for this dangerous Eastern expedition, from which duke Robert never returned. His heir was William, still a child when the news of his father's death at Nicæa reached Normandy. This child-duke was that famous William, surnamed the Conqueror, whom we shall meet with again in the recital of the reign of Edward the Confessor, and who eventually became king of England.

Duke Robert died in 1035, the same year in which the great Canute passed away. The son of Robert by Arletta was only eight years old; his was a joyless childhood. The stern, grave Norman barons separated him at once from his mother Arletta, whom the chiefs of that proud race regarded with some contempt as the daughter of a despised tanner. At an age when young men have seldom to cope with the stern realities of life, William had to fight for his ducal coronet. A dangerous rebellion of the barons had to be grappled with. On the field of the Val-es-Dunes, near Caen, in 1047, the young duke first showed his great skill as a military commander and his influence as a leader of men, and from the day of that great victory he reigned as absolute master in his Norman duchy. Edward the Confessor, William's near kinsman, during the greater part of William's rule in Normandy, was reigning in England.

Thirty years passed from the accession of the boy-duke, to the year of the invasion of England, and although the years were largely filled with wars, with invasions undertaken and invasions repelled, they were, on the whole, prosperous and honourable years for Normandy. They include three signal victories. The first, at Val-es-Dunes, we have already referred to; it signified the end of internal dissension; after the day of Val-es-Dunes, Duke William had no foes at home to contend with. The second of his great battles was fought at Mortemer in 1054. There he defeated a great invading army of Frenchmen, and so complete was the rout that we read how in all Normandy there was not a prison that was not full of Frenchmen. The third battle, at Varaville, in 1058, was fought again with the French, and the victory of William was so decisive that it partook rather of the nature of a massacre than a battle. This was the last act of the long wars between William and his suzerain, the king of France, and the great battle won at Varaville in the year 1058, left William perhaps the most powerful and dreaded ruler on the continent of Europe. Five years later the Norman dominion was increased by the great and rich province of Maine, and of its noble capital, Le Mans, which henceforth was as much a Norman city as Rouen or Bayeux.

In this necessarily very brief sketch of William's life in Normandy, two singular pieces of good fortune which befel the great duke whose fortunes later became bound up with England, must not be forgotten. He was singularly happy in his choice of a wife. His marriage with Matilda, the daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders, was no doubt a love marriage, but it was a fortunate connection for the duke of Normandy. The alliance with the powerful and wealthy house of Flanders strengthened Normandy in Northern

Europe. But it was the *woman*, rather than the princess, who helped William so markedly during his stormy, prosperous reign. Here and there the patient student of history detects in the beautiful story of Matilda's career the faults and errors of a woman. But these, after all, are only spots on a very noble and pure life. Her court was, with its brilliancy and splendour, a very model of an early mediæval court, as a centre of knightly virtues and true chivalry. Her patient love for her great husband, her unwearied devotion to the many hard state questions which so constantly harassed her life after William became king of England—when she was often left alone as regent of Normandy—her constant care for the poor and suffering, make up many a varied title to honour in Matilda's eventful story. After the Conqueror lost Matilda in the year 1083, men say that he never had another hour of brightness.

By William's side also stood, from about the year 1059 until the day, twenty-eight years later, when the wearied Conqueror closed his eyes at St. Gervais on the hill above Rouen, the greatest scholar and divine in England; but Lanfranc, the mighty Duke's friend and constant adviser, was more than a great student and churchman; he was one of the wisest and most far-seeing of statesmen. He will come before us again, for next to William he played the most prominent part among the Normans after the conquest of England. Although he was the chief and the most trusted of the advisers of the Norman duke both before and after the year 1066, and the minister to whose counsels the invasion of England was principally due, the monk-archbishop Lanfranc possesses a history so pure, a record so white, that to impute to him, in the matter of the Norman claim to and subsequent invasion of England, any but the highest motives, would be impossible. Alone among the Normans in the age of the Conquest, does Lanfranc appear to have won the love of the Anglo-Saxon people. It was indeed the crowning gift of fortune which gave to the Conqueror a queen such as Matilda, and a minister like Lanfranc.

This little digression on the story of the Normans was necessary to the understanding of the story of the reign of Edward the Confessor; because on the failure of the Danish line of kings, and with the accession of Edward the Confessor, *Norman* influence became gradually and increasingly felt in England, till it became paramount when the Norman duke William defeated and slew the Saxon Harold, Edward's successor, at Hastings.

It has not been by any means in the language of exaggeration that we have painted this brief sketch of the career of the descendants of Rollo and his handful of Vikings. They became in an incredibly short space of time, as their historian* loves to paint them, "the foremost apostles alike of French chivalry and of Latin Christianity among the nations of Europe. In the tenth and two following centuries *the Normans* of France, England, and Italy were the foremost among peoples; in devotion the most ardent religious reformers, the most fervent worshippers, the most lavish givers to churches and monasteries; in war they were in the front rank, as crusaders and conquerors;

* Prof. Freeman.

EXCOMMUNICATION OF KING ROBERT THE PIOUS OF FRANCE FOR MARRYING WITHIN THE PROSCRIBED LIMITS,

(From the picture by J. P. Laurens in the Louxembourg Gallery.)

in the arts of peace, the children of Rollo learned, improved, adapted everything."

It is worth while to bestow a little further thought on the character and ideas of the men whom we know under the name of dukes of Normandy, who were the chief instruments in raising the Normans from a state of semi-barbarism to the proud, even unique position they held among the nations of Europe at the period of the Conquest of England. From the latter days of their famous ancestor Rollo, each of the six Norman dukes [Richard III., who scarcely reigned one year, is not reckoned here] were evidently firmly persuaded of the truth of Christianity, and were *at times* even passionately "religious," but there is no doubt that the paganism of their forefathers ever coloured their Christianity. The old cult of Scandinavia and its associations was never entirely forgotten, not even after the dukes of Normandy had become kings of England. This lingering shadow of another faith and its ideals, which so long brooded over the Normans, helps us to understand better certain phases of the character of some of the Norman, and even of the early Plantagenet kings of England.

The real but somewhat fitful zeal for the religion of Jesus of Rollo and his successors at Rouen, we know was always resolutely combated by a strong and capable, though as time went on gradually diminishing party in the great Danish settlement generally known as Normandy. For more than a century after the "coming of Rollo" the ancient city of Bayeux was the headquarters of this pagan party, who were sternly opposed to all Christianising influences. It is singular what a powerful hold the old worship of the Scandinavian gods exercised upon the Viking peoples of the north. There seems so little that would be likely to attract men who had made any progress in culture and the arts of civilisation, and above all in the teachings of Christianity, in the religion which taught men to worship Thor and Woden and the cruel battle-loving gods of Scandinavia. It seems to have appealed in a special way to their national feeling. They probably believed that their paganism and its bitter hostility to Christianity, would alone keep them distinct as a nation. They feared, and with good reason, that at no distant period they, the conquerors, would blend with the conquered, whom they despised, and that with the adoption of the religion of the vanquished peoples, in England the Danes would become Englishmen, and that in France they would become Frenchmen.

One singular feature of this lingering spirit of the paganism of the north, is specially noticeable in the story of these mighty Norman dukes, whose work so permanently influenced our England and its church. In spite of their love for and real belief in Christianity, in their *marriage* relations, with rare exceptions, the Norman dukes persistently followed pagan rites and pagan customs. Nor were the Christian ecclesiastics, whose influence and teaching in other respects generally guided and moulded their lives and policy, able to persuade the Norman dukes to adopt the practice of Christians in this important particular. For state reasons, these powerful chieftains were usually induced to go through the Christian form of a marriage with some Frankish princess,

for the sake of the strength and prestige which such an alliance would naturally give them and their people; but they chose almost invariably as the mother of their children some unknown woman, usually of Danish extraction, to whom they were united by some heathen tie usual among their Northern ancestors. For instance, duke Rollo married with Christian rites Gisella, daughter of the Frankish king Charles the Simple; but his real wife, "More Danico," according to the ancient usages of the North, was Popa, the mother of his heir and successor, Guillaume longue Épée. So this same Guillaume longue Épée publicly married Liutgarda, the daughter of the proud, long-descended house of Vermandois, though the real wife, the mother of his children, was the unknown Espriota. Her son was the famous duke Richard I. Sans Peur (The Fearless). Richard Sans Peur for state reasons allied himself, but only in name, with Emma, the daughter of Hugh le Grand, duke of France; but the mother of his successor to the dukedom of Normandy—Richard II. le Bon, the "friend of the monks"—was Guenora, famed far and wide for her beauty and grace. Emma of England, the queen successively of Ethelred and Canute, the mother of Edward the Confessor, was the daughter of Richard Sans Peur and this same Guenora. It will be remembered also that William, the last and greatest of the six famous Norman dukes, the conqueror of England, the son and heir of duke Robert the Magnificent, for a mother had no princess of ancient lineage, but only Arletta, the daughter of the Falaise tanner, who was joined to duke Robert of Normandy by no Christian bond or rite. The sad title which history gives to William the Conqueror, too truly tells the story of his father's unhappy alliance.

No doubt this open disregard of the sacredness of the marriage rite on the part of the successive Norman dukes contributed not a little to the bitter feeling of scorn and hatred with which these powerful and brilliant princes were viewed by their Frankish neighbours. "No community of language or religion, no sentiment of friendship or feeling could conceal from the Carlovingian eye the stain of the black Danish blood. Living or dead, the Dane (though he called himself Norman) stunk in their nostrils."* Writing of the death of the mighty Richard Sans Peur, who passed away in his palace monastery of Fécamp in the year 996, the monk chronicler Richerius thus describes the dead Norman duke: "Richard the *Duke of the Pirates* died of the lesser apoplexy"—thus scornfully writing of a man whose power was greater than that of any sovereign prince of his time in France, whose splendid and magnificent court was the most aristocratic, to use the modern term, in Europe. "He would have none," writes the Romance poet, "but gentlemen about him," using, as it would seem, for the first time the word so familiar to our ears.

Such were the people, and such their rulers, who, descending from the same original Scandinavian stock, were now for the third and last time to affect from the outside the destinies of England and her church.

* Palgrave: "Normandy and England," chap. iv., part ii.

THE CASTLE OF FALAISE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

Norman Youth and Training of King Edward—His Coronation—His Reign never Challenged—The Three Great Earldoms and their Rulers—Peaceful Character of his Reign—Influence of Godwin and Harold—Universal Regard and Reverence for the King—His Laws—His Character—Personal Appearance—His Norman Preferences and Consequent Mistakes—Robert the Archbishop—Bishops appointed by the King and Witan—Archbishop Stigand—Doubts of his Ecclesiastical Status—Bishops Lyfing and Leofric—The "Rule" of Chrodegang—Archbishop Aldred of York—Harold's Foundation and College at Waltham—State of the Church of England at this Period.

THE period from A.D. 1042–1065, although a very memorable period for England and her church, contains but little history properly so called. It was an age of almost unbroken peace, as far as countries beyond the sea were concerned, and in consequence considerable prosperity was enjoyed at home. A great change was gradually passing over the land, but it was a bloodless change, unaccompanied with suffering. In the picture of it the story of the church

fills up most of the canvas; and yet in England, save in the person of the king himself, no great churchman came to the front. Before telling the story of the church during this period of change it will be well, as heretofore, briefly to sketch the principal events which happened between 1042, the year of the accession of king Edward, usually called the Confessor, and 1066, the year of his death and of many other notable events.

King Harthacanute, the Dane, the son of Canute and Emma, had before his death formally adopted as his heir his half-brother Edward, the son of his mother Emma and her first husband, the long-dead Ethelred the Unready. The new king Edward belonged to the glorious house of Alfred; he could trace his lineage in a direct house back to the West Saxon Cerdic. The Dane had come and gone, and once more a prince of the old Saxon line sat on the throne of Alfred. But though Edward the Confessor was an Englishman of Englishmen by descent, he was so by nothing else. His mother, the once beautiful Emma, the "Gem of Normandy," was the daughter of duke Richard the Fearless (Sans Peur), the great-grand-daughter of the mighty Viking Rollo. Edward himself had been brought up, not in English Winchester, but in Norman Rouen, an exile from his child-days. The Norman tongue was what he loved; he only knew Norman manners and customs; everything English was strange to him; his friends and associates were Norman. It was in the Norman church that he had learned the story of the religion to which he was so passionately attached. To him England was a strange and foreign country, and it was only in the last fourteen years of his reign, under the influence of a great Englishman, that he really became an English king.

SEAL OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR. (*British Museum.*)

But Edward belonged to the old royal race of Cerdic, descendant of Woden. He was the chosen representative of the famous

Saxon kings of the house of Alfred, to which England was with good reason attached, and as such he was welcomed in England by the people; and while he lived, such was the love borne to that royal house, no other man was even dreamt of as a possible king. In spite of the wise and beneficent rule of king Canute, the thought of another Danish king was hateful to the nation. Throughout England detestation of the Danes was deeply ingrained, and the misrule of Canute's two sons, who ruled successively as Harold Harefoot and Harthacanute, served completely to efface the memory of the prosperous and generally happy reign of Canute himself.

Prominent in the election of Edward as king, appear the citizens of the now wealthy and powerful London. The leaders of the English party, who brought about the national choice of the son of Ethelred the Unready and Emma, were Godwin, the earl of the West Saxons, and Lyfrig, bishop of Worcester, Devon and Cornwall. The close and intimate union of church and state in England was at this period completely cemented, and the power and influence of the church continued to grow during the long and generally quiet reign of Edward the Confessor. The adoption of Edward by Harthacanute, and the latter's ardent desire to acknowledge him as his successor, of course materially aided the peaceful succession of the son of the Saxon Ethelred.

Edward was formally crowned king at Winchester, on Easter Day of the year 1043, by Eadsige, archbishop of Canterbury; Elfric of York and most of the English prelates assisting at the august ceremony. Nor was his crown ever seriously challenged. In the north, where any such danger might most probably be looked for, Magnus, the son of the Christian king St. Olaf, was the most powerful chief, and king already of Norway. During Harthacanute's life Magnus and Harthacanute had agreed that whichever of them outlived the other should succeed to his dominions. Harthacanute had died, and Magnus, by virtue of this old agreement, was acknowledged king of Denmark; but he never seems to have made any serious claim to the crown of England. Never during the twenty-three years of Edward the Confessor's reign, was England really in any danger from the north. There were more than once threatenings of invasion, but they died away.

A rapid glance over the north, so dreaded by England ever since the first Viking raids at the close of the eighth century, shows us two great figures who, after the death of king Magnus in 1047, played a prominent part in the history of the eleventh century. One of these, Swein Estrithson, was the son of earl Ulf and Canute's sister Estrith, through whom his somewhat shadowy claim on the English crown was derived. He had acted as commander of Harthacanute's army in Denmark, and succeeded Magnus as king of that country in 1047. During a long reign of some thirty years he deservedly acquired the reputation of a great and wise prince, but his claims on England were never seriously pressed. The other, Harold Hardrada, half-brother of St. Olaf, king of Norway, after the terrible battle in which Olaf lost his life, became a wanderer, and obtained a great reputation for his romantic deeds of arms in the south of Europe. We find him, on

Magnus' death, sovereign of Norway, and for years the policy of this famous successor of the pirate sea-kings was a perpetual menace to England. But his designs on the English throne were not carried into effect until after king Edward's death, when, taking advantage of the disturbed state of the kingdom and the disputes arising respecting the succession, he invaded England with a great fleet and army, and was defeated by king Harold, with the loss of his life, at the battle of Stamford Bridge, in the year of Edward's death (A.D. 1066).

The only possible serious competitor for the crown when the Witan chose Edward —thus giving effect to the voice of England in electing a king of the old West Saxon line—was an exile in Hungary. A quarter of a century before, the infant sons of Edmund Ironside, the elder brother of Edward the Confessor, when their lives were threatened by Canute, had found a shelter at the distant court of king Stephen in Hungary. Their very existence was, however, forgotten in England. Of these two exiled princes Edmund was, in fact, dead; the other, Edward, was still living, and, far on in the Confessor's reign, was recalled to his native land with a view of being adopted by the childless king.

We mention this exiled prince, whose legitimate claims were never a source of danger to the Confessor, because through him the members of the present royal house of England derive their claim to be the direct successors of the imperial house of Wessex—heirs of Cerdic, of Egbert, of Alfred. This will appear from the following summary of the earlier links in our sovereign's genealogy:—

From WODEN, or ODIN,
descended
From .. CERDIC (Founder of West Saxon Dynasty), King of Wessex.
descended
From .. ALFRED THE GREAT, King of England.
descended
ETHELRED THE UNREADY, King of England.

EDMUND IRONSIDE, King of England (part).
EDWARD THE CONFESSOR, King of England.

EDWARD THE ATHELING.

EDGAR ATHELING.
CHRISTINA, a Nun.
MARGARET = MALCOLM, King of Scotland.

EDITH (Matilda) = HENRY I., King of England.

MAUD THE EMPRESS = GEOFFREY OF ANJOU.

From HENRY II. (Plantagenet), King of England,
descended
EDWARD, KING OF ENGLAND.

There is, besides, to be remembered that every descendant of William the Conqueror and Matilda, his queen, was also by *her* a descendant of Alfred, whose daughter Elfthryth married Baldwin II. of Flanders, the ancestor of Matilda.

During the reign of Edward the Confessor England was divided, roughly speaking, into three great governments or earldoms—namely, *Wessex*, to which was added Kent and East Anglia; *Mercia*, including all the Midlands, extending generally from South Yorkshire to Wessex, from East Anglia to the Welsh borders; and *Northumbria*, including the entire North of England, from the Humber to the Scotch border. The powerful nobles to whom these earldoms were entrusted were as follows:—

Earl Godwin (of uncertain lineage) was first raised to high office by king Canute. He became in time earl of Wessex, and at the accession of Edward the Confessor was by far the most influential man in the

realm. During his lifetime, his son Harold (afterwards king) was earl of East Anglia. After Godwin's death, in 1053, Harold became earl of Wessex, and virtually acted as sub-king to Edward the Confessor. Gyrth, a brother of Harold, succeeded him as earl of East Anglia. In the year 1055 another brother of Harold, Tostig, was appointed earl of Northumbria.

Earl Leofric, son of Leofwin, earl of Mercia, had, when Edward the Confessor became king, already succeeded his father in the great Midland government. He was the husband of the famous Lady Godiva of legendary story. Leofric died in 1057, and his son Alfgar followed him as Mercian earl. *Alfgar's* children played a great part in the latter years of Edward the Confessor, in the short reign of Harold, and in the times of William the Conqueror. His eldest-born, *Edwin*, followed his father, Alfgar, in Mercia, Alfgar dying in 1062. Morkar, Edwin's brother, became earl of Northumbria when Tostig, the son of Godwin, was banished in the year 1065. Aldgyth, sister of Edwin and Morcar, married first Griffyth, the Welsh king, and subsequently Harold the earl, king of England.

THE DEATH OF SIWARD. *Photo: Hollyer.*

(By permission, from the picture by Val Prinsep, R.A.)

Earl Siward filled the great office of earl of Northumbria. He was a warrior of the old Danish type. It is related of him that when he felt death approaching, he said "it was a shame for him to die,

not on the field of battle, but of sickness like a cow"; and calling for his armour, had himself all harnessed as if for battle, and so breathed his last. His elder son had fallen in the war with the famous Macbeth of Scotland. His younger son, Waltheof, was, when earl Siward died, still a child. He became earl of Northampton, and subsequently was the hero of one of the saddest tragedies of the Conqueror's reign.

Edward the Confessor's reign was, generally speaking, a period of peace in the church as in the state. The story of the church, and how its peace was occasionally broken, must receive separate treatment. In the state, no foreign wars have to be recorded, no foreign invasion harried the land. Within the island there were some race troubles, and for a time war was carried on with Wales and Scotland; but, except in some border forays, England proper was never seriously affected by these, and out of both these home wars she emerged the victor.

The Welsh troubles were spread over many years. The year before Edward's accession, prince Griffyth became king of Gwynedd, or North Wales. He was a chieftain of great distinction and of conspicuous ability, and from Gwynedd his dominion gradually extended over the whole of Wales. He was a bitter and at times even a formidable foe to England, hating Dane and Saxon alike; and in history he will ever be conspicuous as being the last native prince under whom the Welsh—the ancient British remnant—played a really important part in the history of England. Griffyth had, however, the misfortune of finding an adversary greatly his superior in the art of war.

DRAWING REPRESENTING CHRIST BEFORE PILATE.
(From a Psalter of the time of Edward the Confessor. 11th Century.)

Harold, earl Godwin's son, was an able strategist and a valiant soldier, and had behind him the almost boundless resources of wealthy England during a period of an almost unbroken peace at home. We read of two important campaigns of Harold in Wales. The first was successful, but it left king Griffyth still powerful, still able to threaten the peace and prosperity of the borderlands of England and Wales. The date of this first campaign was 1056. The second was closed by the complete subjugation of Wales, and the gallant native king, after his final defeat, was murdered by his own subjects. The fall of Griffyth at the close of the second Welsh war was in the year 1063.

The Scotch war was really a war between the great Northumbrian, earl Siward, and the Scottish usurping king Macbeth, the hero of Shakespeare's well-known tragedy. Macbeth, as under-king of Moray, had in sober truth obtained the Scottish crown at the price of a great crime—the murder of the over-king of Scotland, Duncan. But the reign of Macbeth—1040–1058—was a time of unusual quiet and prosperity for Scotland, and he and his well-known wife Gruach were specially famous for their generous bounty to churches in Scotland. Malcolm Canmore, the son and heir of the murdered Duncan, was an infant when his father's life and reign were suddenly cut short. Being, as he was, a near kinsman of Earl Siward, it was no doubt a desire to restore Malcolm to his lost inheritance which brought about the Scotch war. With the consent of his English sovereign, Siward invaded Scotland with a powerful force. Macbeth was defeated in a pitched battle in the year 1054, and after a long-drawn-out war, was finally defeated and slain four years later, when Malcolm was solemnly crowned king of Scotland at Scone in 1058.

The banishment and subsequent return of earl Godwin and his sons in the year 1052, which must presently be recounted in more detail, were attended with little bloodshed, and only slightly affected the prosperity of the country. Even the revolt of Northumbria against earl Tostig, Harold's brother, although dangerous and threatening for a time, was put an end to without involving the country in a civil war. It was owing to earl Harold's wisdom and moderation that this formidable rising was put down. It happened in this wise : When Siward died in 1055, his heir, Waltheof, was still a child ; his eldest son had fallen in the war with Macbeth in Scotland. Tostig, Harold's brother, in consequence, was appointed to the great government ; Tostig was king Edward's personal friend. He proved himself, however, a severe if not a merciless ruler, and eventually the whole province rose up against him. In a formal Northumbrian Gemot, or assembly of the chief men, Tostig was deposed from his earldom, and outlawed. The same Northumbrian Gemot elected Morkar, the younger son of earl Alfgar of Mercia, to be their earl. This was a high-handed, indeed a rebellious act on the part of the turbulent Northumbrians, and a civil war seemed imminent. A strong force from the north, under the newly-elected earl Morkar, marched into the midland counties of Northampton and Huntingdon, behaving as though in an enemy's country. King Edward, as the friend of Tostig,

wished for war to be carried into Northumbria to avenge the insult and injury done to his friend; but the wiser counsels of Harold, Tostig's brother, prevailed, and at a great national Witan held at Oxford in 1055 the cause of the Northumbrians was considered, and the reasons which led to the revolt were examined, and the result was the banishment of Tostig and the confirmation of earl Morkar in his room.

These are the only wars in which England was involved in king Edward's reign; none of them seriously affected the prosperity of the land. Its other events, being so closely interwoven with ecclesiastic matters—many of them closely connected with Normandy and its mighty duke so loved of Edward—will be better told in our history of the church and its fortunes.

What was the peculiar charm, the especial merit of that strange man whose somewhat uneventful reign we are trying to picture, but whose influence over the church in England was so great? He was no hero-king, no great lawgiver*, no writer, like the great Alfred whose works, written in that toil-filled life of his, raised and instructed his people. He was not even a conqueror; no new province or country was added by him to England. No group of stately sons or fair daughters gathered round the death-bed of the childless Edward, who might carry on the tradition of his work, and keep fresh the reverence for his memory. And yet, without any of these titles to honour, the memory of the saint-king, Edward the Confessor, was treasured by the English people for centuries with a changeless love, by men alike of Saxon and Norman lineage; was held sacred by each successive dynasty which has occupied his throne, alike by the kings of the Conqueror's house, as by sovereigns of the Plantagenet and Tudor lines. It is only in comparatively recent times, since mediæval thoughts and aspirations have given place to modern, that the reverence for Edward the Confessor has become rather an antiquarian than a national feeling. But it was not always so, and the power and influence which the saint-king, so closely identified with the church during his lifetime, and still more after his death, exercised for so long a period over the English nation, is a strong evidence of the hold which the Church of England—the church of which Edward was so devoted a servant, and whose interests he had so deeply at heart—possessed over the hearts of the English. It is also a weighty testimony to the close union between the church and the state in the Saxon era, which closes with the year of Edward's death, as well as in the Norman time, which commenced with the reign of Edward's friend and kinsman, William the Conqueror, who followed him so soon on the throne of England.

It is not by any means an impossible task to discover at least some of the causes at work, which led to this enduring national reverence and love for the great churchman king. The Normans would especially honour him as the near kinsman of their own mighty duke, as one who ever loved Norman customs, and who had successfully introduced them into England. They claimed him, too—though this was

* On the "Laws" of the Confessor, see page 50.

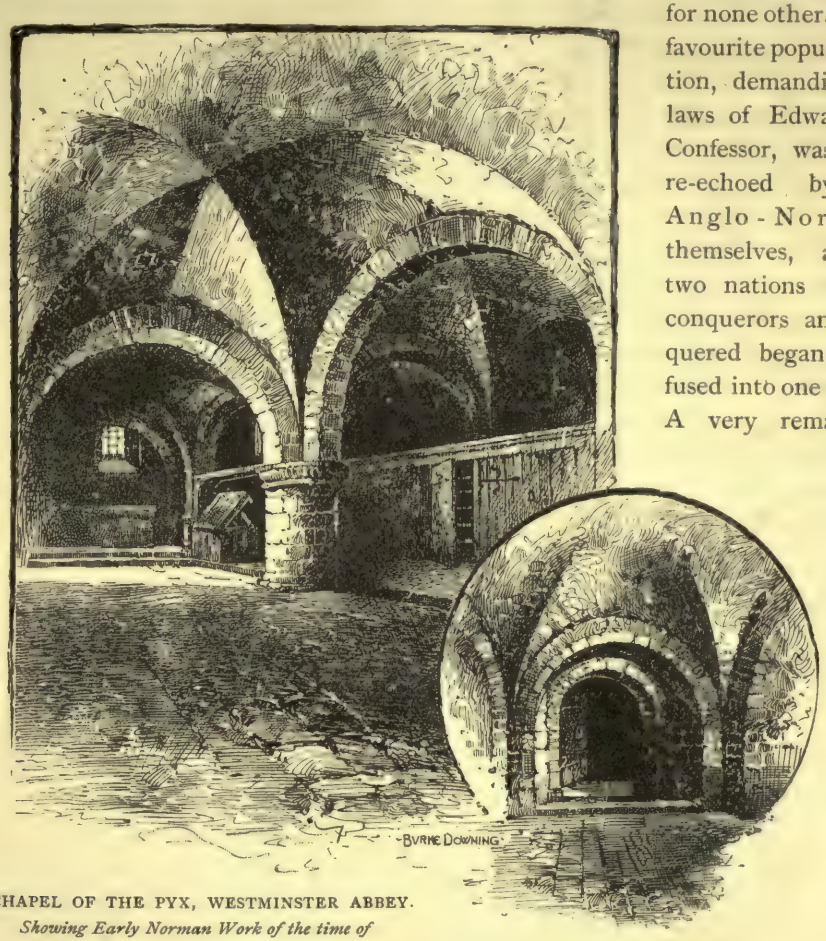
a much-disputed claim — as the Saxon king who named the Norman duke as his successor; as having done much to prepare the way for the great Conquest. To Normans he would, among the great Saxons of that age, ever stand out prominently as the friend of Normandy. The Saxons, on the other hand, would love his memory as being the last of the old royal race of Cerdic the Woden-descended, who bore rule in England as the last kingly heir of Alfred and his loved house. In the sad days of oppression and wrong that followed, the quiet beneficent rule of the last Saxon king would be sadly remembered. Thus, by conqueror and conquered, would the memory of Edward the Confessor be alike honoured and reverenced.

By the church, Norman or Saxon, the good deeds of Edward would ever be unforgotten. The Saxon would be mindful of his princely liberality, of his boundless generosity, of his love for and devotion to monk and prelate, of his fervid piety. No king before him had been such a friend to the church, her institutions, her foundations, her churches and abbeys; while the lordly abbey of the West-minster — the work of many years—consecrated while the saint-king lay dying beneath the shadow of its walls, remained as the enduring memorial of his great love for religion, the proudest minster in England, one of the noblest churches north of the Alps. The Norman ecclesiastics would be equally ready to reverence the monk-king, as many chose to style him, when they remembered how Edward loved their race, and even by preference chose Normans to fill the highest positions, the most confidential posts. Bishop and abbot and royal chaplain were again and again selected out of his Norman friends, often, indeed, to the deep displeasure of his Saxon subjects.

But all these causes, though in after-days they might have been sufficiently powerful to have procured for him the curious honour of canonisation, to have secured his formal recognition by a grateful church as a member of the illustrious company of the saints, would never of themselves have sufficed to win him that unique position in the hearts of the English people which for centuries was occupied by Edward, the holy king. Later historians and painstaking writers, in relating the events of his reign, and in estimating the character and work of the Confessor, have rarely taken into account the strange charm and enormous *personal* influence of Edward, which long remained a tradition among the English people; while his mediæval biographers, thinking to do him honour, have so enveloped his memory with a wrapping of miracles, visions, supernatural gifts, that it became difficult to distinguish the false from the true in his history. It has thus become the fashion in modern times to belittle his work, to speak scornfully of his character, to describe his life as one better fitted for an abbot of a Norman religious house, than for a crowned king of England. Had such been really the case, the Confessor, while winning his position as one of the English saints, would never have gone down to generation after generation as the darling of the English peoples. No king of England, not even the great Alfred himself, has ever succeeded in finding the

key to English hearts so successfully as did Edward.

This general and enduring devotion to the memory of the saint-king, certainly was not merely a romantic affection for one who was popularly credited with miraculous powers of healing, and of seeing into the hidden things of futurity. Our most serious and scholarly historians* refer at some length to the curious fact of the people of England crying, in the reign of William the Conqueror, king Stephen, Henry I., and the empress Maud, for the "laws of the good king Edward," and for none other. This favourite popular petition, demanding the laws of Edward the Confessor, was even re-echoed by the Anglo-Normans themselves, as the two nations of the conquerors and conquered began to be fused into one people. A very remarkable instance of this national feeling occurred during one of the intervals when the empress Maud, Henry Beauclerc's daughter and heiress, was in power. The men of the great and wealthy city of London prayed her that she would observe "the laws of King Edward," not the laws



CHAPEL OF THE PYX, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.
Showing Early Norman Work of the time of Edward the Confessor.

* Freeman: "Norman Conquest." Hallam: "Middle Ages." See also Bishop Stubbs: "Constitutional History of England.'

of her father, Henry I. (Beauclerc), because they were too heavy to be borne. This was some seventy-five years after the saint-king had been laid to rest in his abbey of Westminster. And this universal cry of the English people was listened to, we know, even by the haughty Norman kings; for the charter of Henry I. we find declaring that the king gives his subjects the laws of Edward the Confessor, with the emendations made by his father (the Conqueror), with consent of his barons. The charter of king Stephen not only confirms this charter of Henry I. but adds, even in fuller terms than Henry Beauclerc had used, an express concession of all laws and customs of Edward the Confessor. Henry II. (the Plantagenet) repeats the confirmation of his grandfather's charter. And yet it is doubtful if any great code of laws was ever compiled by the saint-king. It was rather the way in which he interpreted and administered the wise Anglo-Saxon laws of the house of Alfred, supplemented by the great Canute, which left so enduring and happy a memory in the hearts of the people. The conduct of Edward the Confessor generally towards the *poorer* freemen of England, seems to have won for him a vast and enduring popularity.

The Anglo-Saxons were an eminently devout race. We have had often to remark this in the course of the story of the English church, when dwelling on the lives of the more prominent men and women who were its distinguished ornaments; and the saint-king who closed the illustrious Anglo-Saxon dynasty of Cerdic and Alfred, was a marked type of the Saxon love of religion. All the biographers of Edward, from the contemporary writer the friend of Edith (Eadgyth), Edward the Confessor's queen, down to the songman of Alianore (Eleanor) the queen of Henry III., unite in describing the simple piety, the ceaseless devotion, the loathing of all sin and evil, the lofty standard of purity of the saint-king. To these features of a singularly guileless character, was added, in Edward's case, the exquisite grace and courtesy of the Norman character. The Anglo-Saxon king had been trained in that chivalrous court of Rouen, where the name and bearing of "a gentleman" had been first introduced. So the poet of king Henry III., about A.D. 1245, writes:—

895 "Each one who sees king Edward
Is more courteous when he leaves him.
Each one receives there, each one learns
Moderation, sense and good manners.
* * * * *
906 "His court was of courtesy
The school, and of accomplishments,
Nor was there since the time of Arthur
A king who had such honour." *

In a generally rough and dissolute age, the standard of morality and purity aimed at in the court of Edward was evidently a high one. The king's life is usually painted as painfully austere. He is commonly represented as a crowned monk, with tastes and habits only befitting a grave churchman, far removed from the ordinary tastes and pleasures of ordinary mortals; he was, however, an ardent hunter, delighting in the pleasures of the chase, and sharing constantly in the manly and popular pursuits so loved by all sorts and conditions of men. He would spend hours in church, says a well-known writer of our days, "and then, as soon as he was free, would be off to the woods for days

* From the poem on St. Edward, addressed to Queen Eleanor.

together, flying his hawks and cheering on his hounds."

That he was especially the friend of the people is undoubted; it is clear that he was zealous for their welfare, anxious ever to remove the burden of excessive taxation, watchful in all things for the lower and less prosperous of his subjects. His well-known benevolence and kindness towards the poor and suffering led these—then, as in all times, the great majority of the people—to look upon him as their natural protector.

"As time went on, the national feeling transfigured him," says the above-quoted writer, "almost into a Saxon Arthur."

> "Much he resembles King Solomon,
> Of great fame, of great renown.
> French, Germans, Lombards,
> Desire to see King Edward,
> To hear his laws and his judgments,
> His sense and courtesy." *

His personal appearance seems to have somewhat separated this last Anglo-Saxon king from other men. His portraiture has been preserved to us. Edward seems to have possessed a curious and somewhat unearthly beauty. He was almost an albino. His full, flushed, rose-red cheeks contrasted with the milky whiteness of his waving hair and beard. There was a kind of magical charm in his thin white hand and his long transparent fingers, which not unnaturally led to the belief that there resided in them a healing power of stroking away the diseases of his subjects. His stately figure, with the large crown or golden diadem ornamented with the triple trefoil or fleur-de-lis, crowning his long, wavy, white hair—the crown usually worn by the Saxon kings at all state banquets and public occasions—must have been at once a singular and imposing presence. The king in his peaceful reign rarely if ever appeared as the warrior, the man-at-arms.

The church exercised in this age vast power and enormous influence. Edward the Confessor was ever its steady, consistent friend; but he was, too, its acknowledged master, and while paying all due respect and honour to the bishop of the Roman see, Edward acknowledged no superior in his Church of England. The marvellous setting which surrounds the legend of bishop Wulfstan refusing to surrender his crozier to the Norman king, as will be presently related, is probably the addition of a later age; but the story is based upon the fact of the holiest of the Saxon bishops receiving originally his see of Worcester from the king's favour alone. He was supreme in the church he loved so well, and which he helped with so splendid a munificence and supported with so changeless a devotion.

For the great love with which king Edward the Confessor was loved by the people of his own time, and which has survived him till it passed into a precious national tradition, it is evident there was solid ground. He represented to the Anglo-Saxons their ideal king—intensely religious on the one hand, and on the other, not disdaining to share in the favourite and popular pursuits of his people. His innocent faith, "his artless piety, his sympathy with the people," says one who has well grasped the secret of Edward's strange charm, "were humble graces within the

* From the "Life of St. Edward," addressed to Queen Eleanor.

reach of every man, woman, and child of every time." All felt that the king lived nearer God than perhaps any of his contemporaries, layman or ecclesiastic. Probably not a few believed that he possessed powers rarely granted to mere mortals; but we leave further reference to this belief till we come to recount his last hours.

The highest tribute that was paid to him is perhaps found in the words of the unknown scribe in the Worcester and Abingdon redactions of the famous English Chronicle, probably written very soon after the king's death. "Far more precious," says perhaps the most learned and trustworthy of our modern historians, "than the vulgar praises of Norman legend-makers, far more precious than even the wrought-up panegyric of the courtly chaplain of his widow, is the song in Edward's honour handed down in our national Chronicles from the hands of a gleeman of his own time and of his own people. The English poet sang of Edward's early troubles—how he had to seek a foreign land when Canute overcame the race of Ethelred, and when Danes wielded the dear realm of England for eight-and-twenty winters. He sang of Edward's personal virtues—how he was holy, clear, and mild; how the baleless king was ever blithe of mood. He sang of the glories of his reign—how he guarded his land and people, how renowned warriors stood around his throne, how the son of Ethelred ruled over Angles and Saxons, how Welsh and Scots and Britons all obeyed the mighty sway of the noble Edward. . . . . Bitter death snatched the noble king from earth. Angels bore his trustful soul to heaven." *

* Freeman: "Norman Conquest," chap. xi., i.

"Edward the noble, chaste and mild,
Guarded the realm—law and people—
Until suddenly came
Death the bitter,
And seized the so dear one.
Angels carried
This noble steadfast soul
From earth into heaven's light." *

In summing up the character of king Edward the Confessor, it would be unfair not to allude to the grave errors in some of the high appointments, especially ecclesiastical, which this devoted friend of the church was led to make. Even in this particular, however, wherein emphatically the beloved king was ill-advised, considerable exaggeration seems to have coloured the accounts of some of our historians. Edward, it must constantly be remembered, had been brought up in Normandy, and in the court of Rouen had spent not only his youth, but a good many years of his early manhood. To him naturally the language, habits, customs, and churchmanship of the Normans were peculiarly dear, and to prefer some of his Norman friends to places of high dignity in the English church, where his power was evidently paramount, cannot be regarded as extraordinary. It was, of course, a grave error; one calculated to excite national jealousy, and even to injure the Church of England, to which Edward was devotedly attached. These appointments do not seem to have been numerous; but some of those men whom he so preferred wrought him the greatest possible injury. And the king's actions in this particular will ever be the chief blots on his blameless life and reign.

The most prominent of the foreigners

* From the Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1065 (Abingdon and Worcester Redactions).

thus preferred was indubitably Robert, a Roman monk who had first been prior of Saint Ouen at Rouen, and afterwards abbot of the great house of Jumièges, on England, has left behind him a very magnificent memorial of his energy in the stately minster of Jumièges, on the Seine banks, which still survives in ruins, and challenges

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR IN CHURCH.

the Seine, not many miles to the north of the beautiful Norman capital. No doubt this Robert had been Edward's intimate friend, probably tutor and spiritual adviser. He was evidently an ecclesiastic of considerable ability, and, apart from the disastrous memories of his career in the admiration of the antiquarian and the architect of our own days. Within two years of his coronation Edward appointed him to the bishopric of London, and on the death of Eadsige, the archbishop of Canterbury, promoted him to the metropolitan see. Robert is said to have possessed

enormous influence with Edward, and a saying was long current that if Robert said a black crow was white, the king would at once believe him.

To Robert is ascribed the principal share in those events which led to the temporary banishment of earl Godwin and his son from England. Godwin returned to power after a short year's absence, and in the reaction which followed, Robert of Jumièges fled the country. He never returned to England. He had only held the arch-see of Canterbury during portions of the years 1051–1052, when the unanimous wish of the English nation recalled the house of Godwin to power. Alarmed at the evident bitterness of popular feeling which had been aroused by his policy, the Chronicle tells us how archbishop Robert and another prelate of Norman birth, Ulf of Dorchester, obnoxious to the people, fled for their lives, and how, mounted and sword in hand, they cut their way through the streets of London, wounding and slaying as they went, and so with difficulty escaped to the sea-coast, when, finding an old crazy ship, they at once made their escape to the Continent. At a formal Gemot or public assembly held in London the same year, among other decrees passed was one declaring Robert and Ulf outlaws.

Robert appealed to Rome for reinstatement. During the whole of the Anglo-Saxon period, there had only been one instance of a former appeal to Rome for reinstatement in a forfeited see by a dispossessed prelate, in the well-known instance of Wilfrid of York, the great Northumbrian bishop, in 678 and again in 702. Although the decision was in the case of Robert, in his favour, the papal command was put aside, and Stigand, bishop of Winchester, was installed at Canterbury. Robert retired to Jumièges, and, dying there, was interred in the stately minster he had erected. King Edward made no opposition to what was evidently the will of the people, expressed in the decision of the Witan, and acquiesced in the deposition of Robert and Ulf. It is remarkable that the grave mistakes of the king in the matter of the preferment of these Norman ecclesiastics in the first half of his reign, do not seem in any way to have affected his popularity with the people of England. Probably his ready acquiescence with the expression of popular feeling quickly effaced the memory of the error.

Another Norman, William, one of the king's chaplains, was appointed by Edward bishop of London, but no popular clamour seems to have been raised against him. He went for a while into banishment at the time of the return of Godwin, but was soon recalled, remaining bishop of London for many years, honoured by Norman and Saxon alike. He died in 1075, leaving behind him a memory long cherished by the citizens of London.

It may be well urged on behalf of Edward's action in thus appointing Normans to high preferment, that it was by no means an unusual thing to appoint foreign ecclesiastics to high posts in the Anglo-Saxon church. King Canute gave Duduco, a Lotharingian, the bishopric of Somerset. Lotharingia signified roughly the southern Netherlands, the borderlands of Germany and France. On the

other hand, Canute appointed several Englishmen to Danish sees. Other Lotharingian prelates, viz. Gisa and Walter, were respectively appointed to the sees of Wells and Hereford in the latter years of Edward's reign, when earl Harold was the all-powerful minister; and this same Harold, whom no one would suspect of un-English tendencies, sent to Liége for Adelhard as the head of the educational department of his magnificent foundation of Waltham Abbey. This last foreign ecclesiastic was the great English earl's chief counsellor in his famous Waltham work.

All this shows us that the best men and the greatest scholars that could be found were often searched for, even across the seas, for these great posts. King Edward's conduct, therefore, in preferring men to high positions in the church from his favourite Normandy, although, under the circumstances of his peculiar relations with Rouen, imprudent and calculated to excite jealousy among his English subjects, was by no means an unusual practice. In the instance of Robert of Jumièges and Ulf he was unfortunate in his choice. Robert, the archbishop of Canterbury, was evidently a most unwise adviser; and Ulf was, from his utter lack of learning and from various other reasons, quite unfit for a bishopric. The majority of the prelates were at this period chosen from among the king's—or in some cases from the queen's—chaplains. Robert of Jumièges, the archbishop, had been, of course, well-known to Edward in Normandy; William of London, Leofric of Exeter, Hermann of Wiltshire, Ulf of Dorchester, Wulfwig of Dorchester (who had been chancellor), had all served the king politically as chaplains and secretaries. Stigand of Elmham, then of Winchester and subsequently the archbishop, had been closely connected with Emma, the queen-mother.

The king's position in the appointment of these bishops and abbots of the Anglo-Saxon church we have already touched upon. It is a question of great moment; and, besides its importance in measuring the claims of the Roman see so soon to be advanced and pressed, it is also closely mixed up with the relations between the church and the state in the times of the Anglo-Saxon kings. In the Anglo-Saxon church the English church and the English nation were one. It was by the king's writ that the bishopric was formally bestowed; and what the king and his Witan gave, the king and his Witan assumed that they could take away. And they acted upon this assumption; for, as we have related, these two great state powers dealt with the sees of the outlawed archbishop and bishop Robert and Ulf as they would have dealt with counties under the government of outlawed earls.

It is noticeable that (1) The appointment to bishoprics and abbacies practically and legally seems to have rested with the king and the Witan. But when the king chose, as he often did, to exercise his power, the appointment really rested with him. Frequently the Witan did little more than register the king's edicts in these matters. (2) Occasionally the monks or canons of an abbey or a cathedral church made an election in a canonical form, and then petitioned the king and Witan to ratify their choice. That the king claimed and exercised the power to

refuse such an election, we know from the circumstances which attended the election of Ælric by the monks of Canterbury to the archbishopric vacant by the death of Eadsige. Ælric was a monk of Canterbury, an able man, of blameless life, and well loved by his community: he was a kinsman of earl Godwin. But the king refused the prayer of the canonical election, and gave, as we have seen, the archbishopric to the then bishop of London, Robert of Jumièges. In the same year king Edward, against the wishes of the monkish chapter, gave the important abbey of Abingdon to an aged Norwegian bishop—one Rudolf. Rudolf was a kinsman of Edward the Confessor, and was weary of his northern see. On this occasion the king pacified the monks of Abingdon by promising them that a free election of their abbot should be allowed them on the next vacancy.* Thus the Anglo-Saxon king recognised a quasi-right on the part of the chapter; a right, however, which he claimed the power to override when he saw fit.

The instance of the choice of the saintly Wulfstan to the bishopric of Worcester is a particularly interesting one. There the king expressly allowed the clergy and people to elect freely; this popular election was approved and confirmed by the king and Witan in 1062; and in this election the legates of the Pope, who happened to be in England at that time, seem to have exercised some considerable influence. This memorable election of the famous Wulfstan to the bishopric of Worcester is referred to by Ælred (or

CRYPT OF WORCESTER CATHEDRAL, BUILT BY BISHOP WULFSTAN.

* Compare Stubbs: "Constitutional History," chaps. vi. and xix.; also Green and Freeman, above referred to.

Photo by Harvey Barton, Bristol.

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

Ethelred), abbot of Rivaulx, who wrote in the first half of the twelfth century, in the course of his narrative of the famous refusal of Wulfstan to give up his bishop's staff, at the command of William the Conqueror and the archbishop Lanfranc. Wulfstan laid the staff instead upon the tomb of Edward the Confessor, and Ælred puts these memorable words into his mouth: "I will give back to thee (king Edward) the charge which thou didst give to me. Thou knowest, most holy king, how unwillingly I took this burden upon me, and how it was thou didst constrain me thereto. The choice of the monks was not wanting, nor the consent of the bishops and nobles; *but it was thy will which stood forth chief above all.* Lo! there is now a new king, a new law, a new primate, who puts forth new decrees. *They charge thee with error who didst make me a bishop.*" This singular assertion of the supreme power of an Anglo-Saxon sovereign, even in the case of a popular election of a bishop, was made by a writer who lived *after* archbishop Lanfranc and Anselm had to a great extent recognised the authority of Rome. It is thus perfectly clear that the Anglo-Saxon kings claimed and exercised absolute power in these episcopal and other great church appointments.* Roger of Wendover, prior of a cell of St. Albans, who died A.D. 1237, puts these words in Wulfstan's mouth, speaking to the dead king Edward, "*me pontificem fecisti.*"

It is singular that in the reign of Edward the Confessor, one of the most devoted kingly friends the Church of England ever

HAROLD SEATED IN STATE. (BAYEUX TAPESTRY.)

possessed, no very distinguished ecclesiastic came to the front; no great soul possessed with an intense conviction of the high sacerdotal privileges of his order, like Wilfrid; no mighty church organiser like Theodore; no scholar like Bede or Aldhelm; no pure and lofty-minded ecclesiastical statesman like Dunstan, whose grand dream to make the church and state

* As this is a most important instance of the ecclesiastical power of the Anglo-Saxon kings, it is well to give the exact words of Ethelred or Ælred, abbot of Rivaulx, in his account of the election of Wulfstan to the Worcester bishopric: "Licet non deesset fratrum electio, plebis petitio, voluntas episcoporum, et gratia procerum, his tamen omnibus tua præponderavit auctoritas, tua magis urgebat voluntas."

one, was partially realised in his own career, and the effect of whose work was stamped for ever on the church of his native land; no fervid missionary spirits like Columba, Columban, or Boniface, arose in king Edward's days. Besides the king himself, the only really master-minds in that quiet, peaceful reign were the two great Saxon earls, Godwin and his son Harold, afterwards the king. But among ecclesiastic persons, although several notable church leaders deserve notice, no one flourished to whom the title "great" can with any justice be applied.

In Canterbury, king Edward found Eadsige reigning as archbishop. At his coronation the address of the metropolitan was of so able and stirring a nature that the writers of the National Chronicle thought it worthy of special mention. But Eadsige soon sickened with a mortal disease which affected his mental powers, and we hear little more of him. The Norman Robert of Jumièges, neither as bishop of London nor during his short tenure of the primacy, gave any sign of superior intelligence, and his friendship with the king was the most disastrous episode of the reign.

The Saxon Stigand, who succeeded Robert in the chair of Augustine, was a complex character. In the course of a long and stirring life, he filled a number of important positions. We first hear of him as priest of Assandun, the little minster of "Expiation" erected by king Canute, in 1020. He became the chaplain and adviser of queen Emma, the widow of Ethelred and Canute; then the friend of Godwin and Harold; successively bishop of Elmham (East Anglia) and Winchester, and then archbishop of Canterbury. Of the saint-king he never was the intimate friend or trusted adviser; at best, Edward seems rather to have tolerated his presence than to have given him his confidence. During his long tenure of his great office, he never was able to command the real affection or even the confidence of churchmen; neither as a scholar or a saint, nor even as a successful statesman, does he occupy a niche in the many-hued annals of our church. It is difficult for us now, when more than eight centuries have passed since Stigand closed his brilliant, stormy life, thoroughly to understand the mixed feelings with which this illustrious man was regarded by his contemporaries. That Edward should have disliked him, and perhaps mistrusted him (although he acknowledged his high official position), is natural enough. Edward was a devoted churchman, and it is clear that some grave flaw existed in Stigand's right to be considered primate. The dislike and distrust was mutual, as we shall see when we come to relate Stigand's behaviour as he stood at Edward's bedside, during the long agony which preceded the death of the Confessor.

What is more perplexing is the bearing of Harold as earl and king, towards Stigand, who was ever Harold's loyal friend and supporter. In the consecration of his abbey of Waltham, the centre of his great educational foundation, earl Harold passed over Stigand, the archbishop of Canterbury, and called upon Cynesige, the undistinguished archbishop of York, to officiate at the formal consecration of his great creation. Again, at the most solemn moment of his life, at his coronation in Westminster

abbey, it was Aldred of York, not Stigand of Canterbury, who placed the crown of England upon the brow of Saxon Harold. William the Norman, following Harold's example a few months later, declined to avail himself of Stigand's services, and Aldred again officiated at the Norman coronation in the same West-minster. Of all the bishops who were consecrated in the days of Edward the Confessor, Stigand only officiated in the cases of Ethelric, bishop of Selsey, and Siward of Rochester. All the other prelates sought consecration at other hands. An uneasy feeling as to Stigand's ecclesiastical position as primate, was evidently general in England. The anxious doubts that were current were shared in by serious laymen, as well as by responsible ecclesiastics.

Reasons for these widely-spread scruples may have existed, which have not drifted down the stream of ages to us, but the following details are, as far as we know, all that was ever alleged against the legality of his position as archbishop. (1) His predecessor, Robert of Jumièges, fled to Rome, loudly complaining of his causeless deposition. His protest was endorsed by the Pope; though no heed, apparently, was paid in England to Rome's remonstrance. (2) For six years Stigand continued archbishop without a pall from Rome. Indeed, one of the charges subsequently urged against him was that he used the old pall bestowed upon his predecessor, Robert of Jumièges. Eventually he received the desired insignia of his great office from Rome; but, unfortunately for Stigand, the donor was Pope Benedict X. The election of this pope was irregular; the cardinals do not seem to have acknowledged him. His reign was brief, only lasting one year; for he was driven from the papal chair, and had to give place to Gerard, bishop of Florence, known as Nicholas II. Benedict X., who gave Stigand his pall, by the Catholic church is reckoned as an antipope and schismatic. Thus Stigand never received the legal recognition of Rome.

We have dwelt upon this circumstance, as it marks a distinct step in the gradual acknowledgment of a serious, though perhaps as yet an undefined claim on the part of the Roman bishop to interfere in the case of the primacy of England. The conduct of a man like Harold, intensely English in heart, shows how deeply the claim of Rome to confirm the appointment of an archbishop of Canterbury had sunk into the hearts even of the most sturdy and patriotic Englishmen, and this at a time when the respect and regard of foreign peoples for Rome had been weakened by the spectacle of well-nigh a century and a half of anarchy and confusion at Rome, and of a long succession of weak and even of infamous Popes. Yet none can deny archbishop Stigand's integrity of purpose, or his unswerving patriotism, or his quiet unobtrusive loyalty; while the melancholy and painful circumstances—hereafter to be related—under which his long and brilliant career was closed, must ever induce the biographer of Stigand to speak gently of the faults and errors of the last of the Anglo-Saxon archbishops of Canterbury.

It was in the fourth year of king Edward that bishop Lyfing died. Lyfing "the eloquent," as the Worcester chronicler styles him, had long played a distinguished

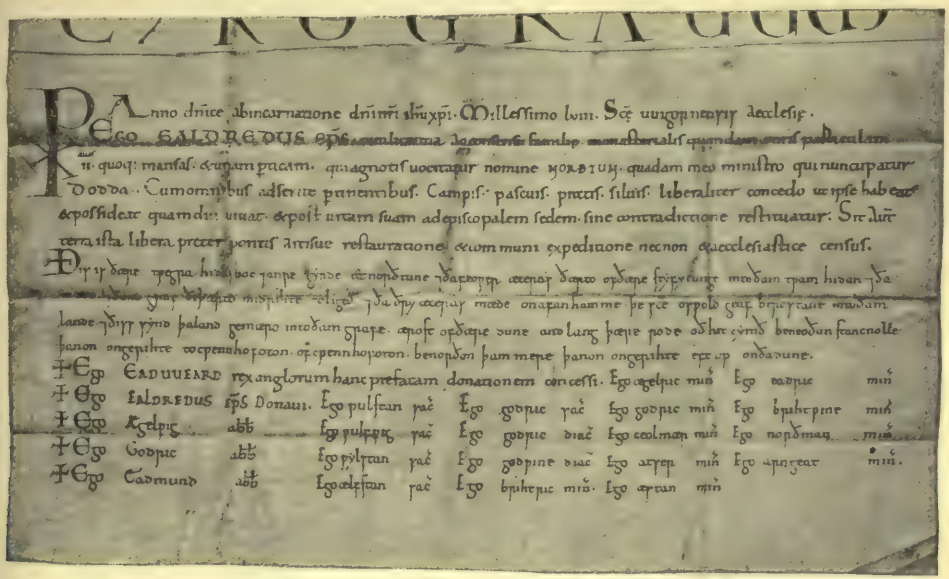
part in the church and state. Originally a monk of Winchester, he was appointed abbot of the western abbey of Tavistock, one of the many houses burned by the Danes in the unhappy days of Ethelred the Unready. He became a favourite of Canute, and accompanied the great Dane on his pilgrimage to Rome, and was the bearer of that king's famous letter to the English people. Canute made him bishop of Crediton in Devon, and with that see he held the bishopric of Cornwall; and subsequently he added to these the important Midland see of Worcester. During the Danish reigns of Harold Harefoot and Harthacanute he was the loyal and devoted friend of earl Godwin, and we find him associated with the mighty earl in the national work of establishing Edward on the throne. He was a fair example of one of those statesmen-prelates who had a large share in the government of the country. But Lyfing was ever a statesman rather than an ecclesiastic or a scholar, and his consenting to hold three vast dioceses is a sure indication of his ambitious character. His memory was, however, long cherished in the west country, not merely as an able and patriotic minister of state, but as a generous friend.

When Lyfing died in 1046, his western dioceses were formally united into one, and Leofric, the king's chaplain, who acted as the royal chancellor, became bishop of Devon and Cornwall. He removed his bishop's chair to the city which was ranked as the capital of the west—Exeter, and in the church of St. Peter, now raised to the rank of a cathedral, Leofric was solemnly enthroned by king Edward. Bishop Leofric was an ardent church reformer, and formed a chapter of secular canons upon the strict rule of Chrodegang of Metz.

Chrodegang, archbishop of Metz, who had lived some three centuries before the reign of Edward the Confessor (742–766), endeavoured to establish a modified form of the Benedictine rule in cathedral chapters. The canons were to live under the rule of the bishop. They had a common refectory and a common dormitory; their life was carefully mapped out; certain times were appointed for manual labour, others for study; certain services were to be daily attended. Pastoral duties, such as baptism and preaching, were enjoined upon them. They were to be celibates, but they might—different from monks—enjoy individual property. They did not wear the peculiar dress of the monastic order, and their dietary was on a far more liberal scale than that prescribed by the Benedictine rule. The rule of Chrodegang was soon adopted by as many as eighty-six chapters. Charlemagne especially favoured this famous reform movement, and many colleges of canons under the rule of Chrodegang were formed, in addition to the cathedral bodies for whom it had originally been devised. Louis le Débonnaire, Charlemagne's son and successor, presided over a great council at Aix-la-Chapelle in 816. This council gave its formal sanction to the "rule," which was generally adopted in most of the French, German, and Italian cathedrals. Not a little of the wealth of these cathedral chapters was owing to the general favour with which this strict system was viewed. In England, however, it was never regarded with favour, and all the earlier and later attempts to introduce it into cathedral life

generally proved failures. Bishop Leofric's efforts at Exeter to establish the "rule of Chrodegang" in his cathedral, seem only to have been fairly successful during his tenure of the see, which lasted until 1072. Traces, but only traces, of this severe discipline were visible at Exeter in the next century.

of Tavistock. It was in the year 1046 that he was appointed to the bishopric of Worcester. A favourite of the king's, he was soon employed in political affairs, and in the year 1049 we find him associated with bishop Hermann of Ramsbury, the king's chaplain, as ambassador to Rome to procure Edward's absolution from his vow



CHARTER OF ALDRED, BISHOP OF WORCESTER, CONFIRMED BY KING EDWARD A.D. 1058. (*British Museum.*)

The other of bishop Lyfing's sees, Worcester, was filled by a more remarkable man than Leofric. For twenty-three years the monk Aldred filled a prominent and distinguished position in the Church of England as a statesman and ecclesiastic. His early career closely resembled that of his predecessor, Lyfing. He, too, had been a monk of Winchester—a famous training school in those days of Benedictine monks who were destined to fill nigh office. From Winchester, too, like Lyfing, he was called to the post of abbot

of pilgrimage. The result of the Roman mission is well known. The king obtained absolution, on condition of his founding an abbey-church and religious house. The condition was fulfilled in the re-foundation and rebuilding the stately abbey of St. Peter's, Westminster, the most enduring and the most magnificent of Edward the Confessor's works.

In 1054 we hear of bishop Aldred again as Edward's ambassador—this time to the court of the emperor Henry III., at Cologne. The object of this embassage

was to induce the emperor to send to England Edward the Atheling, the exile, the son of Edmund Ironside, whom at this time the childless Edward intended to make his heir. Edward the Atheling had married Agatha, a near connection—probably the niece—of the German emperor. The exiled prince Edward, as the result of Aldred's mission, came to England with his family. Edward died soon after his arrival, but left a son, Edgar, who as Edgar Atheling subsequently played no inconsiderable part in the reign of William the Conqueror. In the year 1058 Aldred again crossed the seas, this time as a pilgrim to Jerusalem. In the same year he officiated at the dedication of the abbey church of Gloucester, which he rebuilt.

It was in A.D. 1060 that Aldred, now one of the most famous of the English statesmen-prelates, was raised to the arch-see of York, retaining, however, his old bishopric of Worcester. This practice among the greater prelates of holding two or more important sees at the same time, was a common abuse at this period. Again this unwearied traveller crossed the seas to seek the pall at the hands of the Pope. The circumstances of his visit to Rome are somewhat confused. At first the pall was refused, the fact of his holding two important bishoprics being the alleged reason of the refusal. The pall was, however, eventually granted, it is said through the influence of earl Tostig, Harold's brother, who was also at Rome. On Aldred's return he resigned the see of Worcester. The next six years were memorable in his ecclesiastical career. The archbishop devoted himself to his diocese, and was distinguished not only as a church reformer, but as a church builder. York and Southwell both received substantial proofs of his vigour and liberality, but to Beverley he seems to have devoted his principal care. We read of his great building work in the noble minster, and of his efforts in decorating the roof of his church, which he adorned with glowing colours till "it looked like another heaven." The splendid pulpit of Beverley, the work of Aldred, obtained especial notoriety; it was marvellously constructed, and rich in costly metals. He also liberally endowed the famous and beautiful church, to which he evidently had a special attachment.

After Edward the Confessor's death, Aldred officiated at the coronation ceremony of Harold in the new abbey of Westminster. He was king Harold's trusted friend, and after the crushing defeat of Harold Hardrada at Stamford Bridge in 1066, king Harold left the vast spoils of the Northmen piratical invaders in the archbishop's care, while he hurried to the south to meet the Norman duke William and his mighty host. The astute and statesmanlike prelate contrived to keep on terms with Harold's conqueror, and was asked by duke William to crown him in the room of the dead Harold. For the second time in the same year, he performed the solemn coronation rite in the Confessor's abbey of Westminster—this time for the Norman William.

During the three terrible years which followed, Aldred continued archbishop of York, and, as far as he could, played the part of mediator between the Conqueror and the hapless conquered English. In the year 1069, worn out with sorrow and

dismay at the treatment of the English, a spectator of the ruthless work of William, powerless to avert the ruin and desolation which he saw coming over his most sorely harried diocese, Aldred died. He had prayed, men said, to be taken from the evil to come; and the eventual burning of York, with its storied minster and its priceless treasures, Aldred was happily not spared to see.

During the reign of Edward, although in the church the influence of the Benedictine order was very great, and the powerful friendship of the saint-king much conduced to the spread of its power, his regard was especially shown in his perpetual lavish gifts to Benedictine monastic houses, and more particularly in the case of the mighty house he was building for the Benedictine order under the shadow of his lordly Westminster. The flourishing condition of great Benedictine houses like Tavistock, Winchester, Peterborough, Evesham, and others, show, too, that Benedictine monasticism was a real power in the land in the days of king Edward. Still there were other agencies at work not friendly to monasticism. Statesmen-prelates, like Lyfing, whose rule extended over three broad dioceses in the west, and Stigand the archbishop, and Aldred of Worcester and York, even though some of them had been trained as monks, were not likely to have been ardent admirers of an ascetic monasticism. Bishops like Leofric of Exeter, who considered that the purity of the church would be best guarded by the establishment of chapters of canons formed after the rule of Chrodegang, above described, were probably no warm friends to a Benedictine monasticism. To men of this school the *via media* of Chrodegang's rule seemed best fitted to train good pastors and teachers; while earl Harold, powerful throughout the last thirteen years of Edward's life, preferred as the model form for training, as well as for pastoral work, an even less monkish, less severely ascetic rule than that of Chrodegang's. What Harold wished to establish in England, will be best seen in a description of his own great creation at Waltham.

The story of the foundation of Waltham, at once minster and college, is an interesting one. Tofig the Proud was a great Danish thane who held the office of standard-bearer to king Harthacanute (it was, as we have related, at his marriage feast that Harthacanute "died, while he at his drink stood"). Tofig the Dane held broad lands in Somerset and Essex. In one of his Somersetshire lordships, on the top of the peaked hill afterwards called, from its form, Montacute, and which gave the title to the proud Norman house of Montague (de monte acuto) was found a miraculous crucifix or rood. Tofig built a church on his Essex estate as a sanctuary for this precious relic, and created a foundation there for two mass-priests. Round the little church of Tofig, attracted by the sanctity of the wonder-working crucifix, which rapidly became an object of popular and pilgrimage veneration, grew the little township of Waltham. This was in the days of Canute. Eventually the son of Tofig fell into disgrace, his lands were confiscated, and Edward the Confessor gave the lordship of Waltham to Harold, then the earl of East Anglia, with whom

it became a favourite residence. Harold rebuilt the small church of Tofig on a larger and more splendid scale, and enriched it with many gifts and precious relics — its most precious possession still being the miraculous rood of Montacute.

The great ecclesiastical foundation of Harold was not a monastic abbey; it was rather a vast educational establishment, with the abbey as its centre; he placed in it a dean and twelve secular canons, each priest living on his own prebend, and some of these, it has been suggested, were even married men; a number of inferior officers supplemented the house. The dominant idea, however, of Harold's work at Waltham was not prayer and worship, or even pastoral work and preaching, though these were by no means to be neglected in the lordly abbey of the Holy Rood, but *education*. The chancellor or chief teacher held a most important position in Harold's fraternity, and to fill this office, Harold brought from over the seas an eminent scholar and teacher named Adelhard, a native of Liége (Lüttich) in Lotharingia, who superintended the teaching department of the house. The foundation was richly endowed with lands. This "foundation of a great secular college, in days when all the world seemed mad after monks, when king Edward and earl Leofric (of Mercia) vied with each other in lavish gifts to religious houses at home and abroad, was in itself an act which displayed no small vigour and independence of mind. The details, too, of the foundation were such as showed that the creation of Waltham was not the act of a moment of superstitious dread or of reckless bounty, but the deliberate deed of a man who felt the responsibilities of lofty rank and boundless wealth, and who earnestly sought the welfare of his church and nation in all things." *

MOULD FOR BADGE WORN BY PILGRIMS TO THE SHRINE OF THE HOLY CROSS AT WALTHAM. (*Guildhall Museum.*)

The church was finished and solemnly consecrated in the year 1060. The chief part of the ceremony was performed by Cynesige, archbishop of York, in presence of king Edward, the queen Edith, and of most of the chief ecclesiastical and civil magnates of the land. Waltham, the abbey of the Holy Rood, and the college attached to it, has been peculiarly identified with its eminent founder. To Waltham, we read,

* Freeman: "Norman Conquest."

Harold loved to retire and pray in the great crises of his life. It was beneath the shadow of its massive pillars that his mutilated remains were laid after the field of Hastings. At the east end of the choir a stone was long shown, bearing the touching words, "Harold infelix." The

NAVE OF WALTHAM ABBEY, SHOWING HAROLD'S NORMAN PILLARS AND ARCHES.

famous rood, in honour of which the noble abbey was originally built, was the especial object of Harold's devotion. It became, not unnaturally in that religious age, the badge and rallying-point of the fighting-men of England. It was the battle-cry in the glorious victory of Stamford Bridge—when the Vikings, so long the curse of the island, met their final and crushing overthrow. It was the war-cry on the bloody field of Hastings, when a glorious death was the guerdon of the last of the Anglo-Saxon kings of England.

But the work of Harold at Waltham was, after all, of short duration. The educational establishment was put an end to after an existence of little more than a hundred years, by the Plantagenet king Henry II., who expelled the dean and secular canons, and put an abbot and Austin canons in their place. In our days a scarred and mutilated fragment of Harold's splendid abbey alone remains, but it is nevertheless a fragment of no small grandeur, and of matchless interest.

On looking back over the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042 to 1066), the thoughtful student of the history of the

church during that last period of Anglo-Saxon rule will see that the church, all through the reign of Edward, was far from being mainly composed of sluggish, inactive members, though such has been the conclusion drawn by many writers on this period.

Yet this idea was, it must be conceded, by no means baseless. As already remarked, it is undeniable that the reign of the Confessor, like the reign of his immediate predecessors, produced no really eminent churchman. A fair number of men of the second rank flourished, such as Aldred, Stigand, William of London, Wulfstan, Leofric, Gisa, and others, but none of these were men of conspicuous ability; and the most famous of them—Aldred, Stigand, and Wulfstan—are remembered rather for what they suffered at the hands of the Norman conquerors, than for what they did or wrote or taught in the quiet, peaceful days of the Confessor. This dearth of prominent men would, when the history of the time came to be written, to a certain extent influence and depress the estimate of writers describing the period in question.

It is also to be expected that Norman writers and chroniclers who lived after the Conquest, would write in depreciatory terms of the church as it existed under the old state of things in England, before *their* people came, and changed the whole framework of government in church and state, and uprooted the entire Anglo-Saxon society, civil and ecclesiastical. No Norman writer could be expected to describe fairly that old English life which the Normans had so ruthlessly destroyed.

Even an historian who has the deepest sympathy with the Anglo-Saxon people, who feels that much if not most of what is great and strong and enduring in the character of the English people, comes from the Anglo-Saxon rather than from the Norman ancestors, must necessarily acknowledge that the church in the days of the Confessor was far from being an ideal church. In all times we see how, after the time of a great revival in its spiritual life and in its activities—educational, missionary, church building, and the like—gradually the spiritual flames which blazed for a time so brightly always died down, and the fire needed to be renewed again. As it was in those far-back days, so has it been in our day and time. We saw it when the great Alfred looked over his reconquered land and its feeble church—the church of Bede, Alcuin and Aldhelm, and mourned over the grievous lack of even the most rudimentary learning among the ecclesiastics of his loved England. We saw it again after another lapse of time, when the fervour of the new life inspired by the burning words and stirring example of Alfred and his ministers had at length died away, when the great Dunstan and his disciples again inspired the Anglo-Saxon church with vigour and spiritual power; and it seems to have been the case that in the days of Edward the Confessor a Theodore or an Hadrian, an Aldhelm or a Dunstan, was sorely needed to rekindle the zeal and the energy of the church in our island. That carelessness and want of fervour, and in some cases positive sloth and selfishness existed among ecclesiastics, is evident from the words of the writer of the contemporary life of Edward, composed for his queen Edith in the first year of her sad widowhood. The author of that "Life"

was evidently an Anglo-Saxon, and yet he speaks in terms of grave severity of the wickedness of his country, of the carelessness of the clergy, and the consequent probability of God's vengeance. The king's own dying words, as given in the next chapter, are also of peculiar weight.

In equally striking language, in the "Estoire de Seint Ædward le Roi," written in Latin and translated into Norman-French for queen Alianore (Eleanor) about 1245—a writing based on much earlier materials—the author speaks of the want of virtue and of the increase of sin in England, as the cause of the mighty vengeance of God, exemplified in the Norman Conquest :—

> "Bishops, prelates and priests
> No longer seek to be good pastors;
> They seek not to feed the sheepfold;
> But to sell them is each one's business,*
> To rescue them from the wolf none cares,
> (They care) only for the milk and the wool."

The writer is equally severe upon the leading laymen, for he goes on to say :

> "Princes, counts and barons
> Go seeking only vain glory,
> Nor do they live but to swallow money;
> The poor they strip and ill-treat."

Granting, however, that the Anglo-Saxon church between 1042 and 1066 sorely needed reformation, and the presence of a new and nobler spirit amongst them, it was still by no means a dead or even a dying church; and, indeed, it seems to have compared very favourably with the churches of Normandy before Lanfranc and his school woke them up into new life and a more active energy. In England, church life, although perhaps lacking in some of the nobler characteristics of Christianity, could by no means be counted as sunk in torpor, or as altogether sluggish and selfish. This would be impossible in England with a king like Edward the Confessor, pious and devoted and even recklessly generous in good works, whose splendid example as a churchman and a pure and devoted Christian lived long after he had passed away; with a queen like Edith, the saintly and devoted daughter of Godwin; with great nobles like Harold, who could devise and at his own cost establish the noble educational foundation of Waltham, and erect the stately minster of the Holy Rood as the centre of his great Waltham work. Nor did Harold, the mighty earl of Wessex and East Anglia, stand alone among the great men of the land in these true works of piety and devotion. The ruler under king Edward of the broad Midlands, Earl Leofric, and his renowned countess, the lady Godiva of the legends—Leofric, the grandfather of the brothers earls Edwin and Morkar, so famous in the records of king Harold, and later of Norman William, were celebrated throughout the length and breadth of England for their boundless liberality to ecclesiastical foundations, and their ceaseless care for the church. We read how, thanks to their care and generosity, Worcester, Leominster, Evesham, Chester, Wenlock, Stow-in-Lindesey—where traces of their work still remains—and Coventry, were adorned and enriched with churches and religious houses, by restorations and new

* Allusion is here made to the sin of "simony." In various degrees it was one of the curses of that age, though apparently this sin was less prevalent in England than on the Continent, but there is no doubt but that its practice seriously marred al church work in England.

buildings dedicated to religious uses. It is recorded of these zealous and earnest servants of God that they were by no means content with merely lavish and generous grants of land and endowments, but that they took a special interest in the building and ornamentation of the many churches and religious houses they watched over or founded anew, in the broad lands of their great Mercian government.

Nor was it only among the ranks of the more prominent laymen that we find conspicuous instances of a lifelong zeal in the service of the church. Many of the prelates of the reign of Edward, even if not men specially distinguished for their profound scholarship, or for brilliant powers of organisation, or for their winning eloquence, were nevertheless earnest and devoted servants of God. Such a man was Aldred, archbishop of York, somewhile bishop of Worcester. We find him playing the part of a statesman and diplomatist, often entrusted with difficult and important foreign missions; but none the less a busy and anxious chief pastor of the vast dioceses entrusted to his charge. Archbishop Aldred was well acquainted with the faults and errors of the church of his day, and thoroughly conscious of what his work and mission among the people ought to be; he was a most zealous reformer of the abuses which had crept into the Anglo-Saxon church. In the chapters of York and Southwell, where laxity of life and discipline marred their usefulness, he introduced a new rule of life—probably that known as the rule of Chrodegang—which we have already described as a rule far more severe than that practised by the secular canons of a cathedral church, though less austere and burdensome than the stern practice of the Benedictine order.

Aldred was a bishop also famed for his boundless liberality. The York historian loves to dwell on these features of an ever indefatigable toiler for the church. He was, too, a great builder: the minsters of Southwell, York, and Beverley—famous church-centres in his archdiocese—were all built or enriched by his costly works. He loved also to beautify his buildings with all manner of artistic devices, with painting and sculpture, and curious and elaborate metal work. Honoured and loved by the saintly Anglo-Saxon king, when Edward died he filled the same place as friend and adviser to king Harold; and after Harold's fate, strange to say, king William the Conqueror seems to have loved and reverenced him. He is reckoned among the very few of the Anglo-Saxon race admitted to the friendship of the great Norman. Aldred even dared to oppose king William in his cruel and high-handed conduct; and men say how in the end the archbishop died of a broken heart, shocked and grieved at the misery among his flock which resulted from the great Conquest.

Leofric and Gisa, respectively bishops of the sees of Exeter and of Wells, were also distinguished for their work as reformers. Both these prelates, with no small pains, remodelled the chapters of Exeter and of Wells, introducing the graver discipline of the rule of Chrodegang into their dioceses.

Wulfstan, who was charged by his detractors as being devoid of scholarship, enjoyed an enormous popularity, and was revered as a saint by all sorts and conditions

EARL LEOFRIC AND LADY GODIVA.

(By permission, from the picture by E. Blair Leighton, in the City Art Gallery, Leeds.)

of men, and was literally compelled to accept the episcopate by the unanimous call of clergy and laity. So great was his reputation for sanctity, that the Norman conquerors found themselves obliged to recognise his holy influence among the people. William, the Norman king, and Lanfranc, the Norman archbishop, in the day of their power, permitted this sturdy Anglo-Saxon patriot still to exercise his great functions as bishop of Worcester even in Norman England.

In the scanty records of that time we catch sight of not a few great religious houses filled with earnest monks, playing an influential part in the life of Edward the Confessor's people. Such were Peterborough and Thorney, Crowland and Ely, the Fen abbeys; such were the renowned Evesham and Bury St. Edmunds; while queen Edith's nunnery and church of Wilton, Harold's famous foundation and minster of Waltham, and above all king Edward's magnificent monastery and stately abbey of Westminster, were enduring memorials of splendid church work undertaken and carried out in the closing years of the Anglo-Saxon monarchy. All this shows us that the Anglo-Saxon church, at the moment when the great change came over it, was indeed no dying or even fading church, but that with all its faults and shortcomings, which we have made no attempt to gloss over or even to minimise, it was yet a church full of vitality and power, and capable of exercising a great and blessed influence among the people of the land

THE SEAL OF THE ABBEY OF WILTON (A.D. 1372).
(*The Matrix is of the* 11*th Century, British Museum.*)

CHAPTER XXIV.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Historical Importance of the Abbey—Its Origin in Edward's Vow—Traditions of the Old Church of St. Peter's—Building of the New Abbey and Palace—Description of the Abbey—Destruction and Restoration by Henry III.—Death of Edward the Confessor—His Death-bed Prophecy—Its Strange Fulfilment—Commits the Kingdom to Harold—His Hurried Funeral, as Depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry—Growth of Edward's Fame—Canonisation—Magnificent Shrine Built by Henry III.—The Centre of the Chapel of the Kings—Subsequent History of the Shrine.

WHILE a little to the north of London the stately minster and college of the Holy Rood was being built by Norman architects on earl Harold's East Saxon lordship of Waltham, a yet vaster and far more enduring work was slowly approaching completion only some two or three miles to the west of the great city, on the banks of the Thames. There, too, Norman architects and builders were employed under the personal supervision of king Edward himself, who watched with anxious care the progress of the huge pile known under the well-known title of the West-Minster. The position which the great abbey, erected by Edward the Confessor with so much pains and cost, has ever since his days occupied in the story of England ; the singular and intimate connection between this mighty church and the state—a connection which has endured for centuries, and of which the abbey and its dependencies are so symbolical—gives to Westminster an importance far beyond its mere beauty and matchless magnificence. In the eyes of the architect and the archæologist it ranks first among the many great and renowned churches of the land, but in those of the historian it possesses even a far higher value.

The abbey of the Confessor, which we are about to describe with some detail, was unquestionably a great work. In size and magnificence it far transcended any building which existed in that day in England. Nay, more—it took high rank among the grandest and most lordly piles that had hitherto been built in any of the countries north of the Alps. Its founder, too, was no ordinary man. "In his lifetime, or at most within a few years after his death, Edward was already deemed to be a worker of miracles. For his dreams, visions, and prophecies he was renowned to his last moment."* Around his great church, as was natural to expect, grew rapidly many a legendary story, but it is not difficult to separate what was no doubt true from these strange traditions. The true story of the foundation of Westminster is as follows.

During the latter days of his long Norman exile things looked very dark and unpromising for the young prince, and there is no reason to doubt the truth of the account of the vow given at

* Prof. Freeman.

some length in the "Estoire de Saint Ædward le Roi." There, amongst other untoward circumstances, the sad death of his brother Alfred is alluded to as depressing the exiled prince, and at this juncture Edward vowed a solemn vow that if St. Peter would protect him, he would go on a pilgrimage to Rome. After he became king the memory of this vow weighed heavily upon him, and the poem represents him saying to his thanes—

"When I was sojourning in Normandy,
* * * * *
News came to me often
Which made me very sorrowful.
* * * * *
Besides God and his Mother
And my Lord St. Peter, I had no comfort.
. . . Then I went one day very sad
Into a church and prayed,
And I made a vow
To go to Rome and pray."

Such pilgrimages, as we have already seen, were very usual among the Anglo-Saxons of high degree. Not a few of their kings, deeming such an act meritorious, had betaken themselves to the sacred sites of Rome, and prayed and offered gifts to the various traditional sanctuaries of the historic city. Canute the Dane, also, not long before had made a memorable pilgrimage Romewards; and a little later we read of earl Harold, of Tostig, his brother, and of others as pilgrims to the same great centre of Christianity. The journey in those days was a tedious affair, and was not without danger. These pilgrimages to Rome, and even to the Holy Land, and the extraordinary merit which was attached to them, were among the characteristic features of religious fervour among the Anglo-Saxons.

Edward's thanes, however, felt that the peace and prosperity then enjoyed by England depended largely upon the personal presence and influence among them of their saintly but childless king, and urgently dissuaded him from the risk. So strongly was this felt, that the matter of the royal pilgrimage was laid before the Witan. The king was induced eventually to send a special embassy to the Pope to obtain a dispensation from his vow. Two bishops were charged with this weighty mission—Aldred, whom we have heard of as bishop of Worcester, and subsequently as archbishop of York; and Herman, the Lotharingian bishop of Ramsbury, afterwards of Salisbury. The date of this mission to Rome was A.D. 1050. It was successful, and Edward's vow of pilgrimage was cancelled by Pope Leo IX., on the condition that the king would found or restore a monastery of St. Peter.

Now, some two or three miles from the western gate of the city of London, which in Edward's time had already acquired a pre-eminence in wealth and importance among the English cities, in what was then known as Thorney Island (the Thames flowing round it), opposite to what is now known as Lambeth Palace, a small and undistinguished religious house had grown up round a little church dedicated to St. Peter. The origin of this church we have in our first volume carried back to the earliest days of English Christianity. Here Sæberht, the first Christian king of the East Saxons, had built for Mellitus, the East Saxon missionary bishop, one of the original companions of, and eventually a successor to, St. Augustine, a small church or oratory, to

balance (says one of the chroniclers) the larger minster of St. Paul within the city walls.

KING EDWARD WATCHING THE ERECTION OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

The contemporary life of king Edward, written for his widowed queen Edith soon after the king's death, gives us some simple and probable reasons for the choice of Edward falling upon this comparatively unknown spot for his restoration of a monastery and church originally raised in honour of St. Peter. The writer tells us the place where the West-Minster afterwards stood was in the immediate vicinity of the famous and wealthy city (London), in the midst of grassy meadows, and on the banks of a flowing river (the Thames), which brought the merchandise and wares of all the world to the city—a curious and early testimony to the matchless situation of London. He gives as another reason

for the choice, the king's special love and devotion to the chief of the apostles; but he does not tell us the story already narrated in its place, how St. Peter was connected with Thorney Island. This most valuable piece of current literature was written, as we have said, for queen Edith, and nearly three times as much space is devoted in it to Edith's restoration of the nunnery of Wilton, a comparatively unknown religious house, as is given to the king's vast work in connection with Westminster.

But there were other reasons which led to the choice of Thorney Island for the foundation of Westminster, the greatest of our English abbeys, round which so much of our English history, civil and ecclesiastical, has clustered during the past eight centuries. In spite of the general notion of the undistinguished nature of the church and religious house of St. Peter before king Edward began to build, yet St. Peter's of Thorney Island must have been a place of some importance; for the English Chronicle relates how the body of king Harold Harefoot, who died at Oxford, was brought from Oxford and buried there. This royal corpse was subsequently dug up and thrown ignominiously into the Thames by his infamous brother Harthacanute. But this does not affect the fact that St. Peter's of Thorney Island had been judged a worthy sepulchre for a king of England. Again, the death of one of its abbots, Wulfnoth, had been judged worthy of a special mention in the English Chronicle. Round the spot, in fact, there is no doubt hung some tradition—dim and faint, perhaps, and half forgotten—of some marvellous event in connection with its first foundation, in the days of Mellitus, the friend and companion of Augustine.* Besides the contemporary life of the saint-king written for the widowed queen Edith, we possess several lives of Edward of a somewhat later date. Of them the principal are (1) the biography of Osbern of Clare, prior of Westminster, composed about A.D. 1158; (2) the yet better-known life written by Ælred or Ethelred, composed a few years later, *circa* A.D. 1163—Ælred was prior of Rivaulx; and (3) the lengthy poem in Latin with a Norman-French translation containing 4685 lines, addressed to queen Alianore (Eleanor), consort of Henry III., *circa* A.D. 1245. In these lives of the saint-king much that is marvellous and improbable is interwoven with the history; but these wonders also doubtless represent not a little of the legendary lore which king Edward found associated with the ancient, but probably decayed holy house of St. Peter's of Thorney, and which no doubt weighed with him when he selected the spot for his famous foundation.

The rebuilding of the great abbey of Westminster went on during the last fourteen or fifteen years of the Confessor's reign. The cost, which must have been enormous, was borne entirely by the Crown. In the foundation and endowment of the monastery which grew up under the shadow of the abbey, much help was given to the king by pious Englishmen, but the cost of the building of the famous abbey itself seems to have been defrayed entirely out of Edward's own resources. The monastic foundation

* This legend is related in vol. i., p. 101.

of St. Peter, which was erected on a large scale, contained great domitories, refectory, cloisters, separate dwellings for the abbot and chief officers, barns, treasury, infirmary, chapter-house, and other buildings, the usual adjuncts of an important Benedictine house.

Adjoining the abbey was also erected a royal palace, evidently of considerable dimensions. This idea, of placing palace and monastery and abbey in close contiguity, was no doubt derived from the immediate ancestors of Edward's Norman mother, Emma, whose favourite abode was rather Fécamp than Rouen. At Fécamp, too, a huge minster threw its broad shadow over a famous monastery and a royal palace. Many a time, during his long exile in Normandy, must Edward have visited Fécamp, and to reproduce Fécamp on a grander or more lordly scale was evidently enough in his mind when he planned the elaborate and stately building hard by his new abbey of Westminster—the restored abbey of St. Peter of Thorney. As several of the Norman dukes, his ancestors, arranged that their last sleeping-places should be in Fécamp abbey, so Edward planned his tomb in Westminster, and almost his last words directed that he should rest there. The wish to unite in one group of buildings the church, the ideal home of prayer, and the ideal tomb; the monastery, which displayed the ideal life of men on earth; and the king's palace, the seat of government, was by no means peculiar to the saint-king or his Norman fathers. We find it reproduced often; notably in Scotland, where Dunfermline palace and Dunfermline abbey grew up alongside each other; and in the abbey of Holyrood, adjoining Holyrood Palace; and later in Spain in that vast pile of royal and monastic buildings known as the Escurial, at once palace, monastery, and tomb.

The size of the new abbey of Westminster was remarkable; it positively occupied almost the whole area of the present building. Nothing resembling it had ever been erected before in England. It set the example of the vast scale upon which in the next generation the churches and abbeys which arose in such numbers in our Island were built. All the older and more renowned English churches, erected by Dunstan and the kings of the house of Alfred, as well as the minsters of a yet older period, were small and mean in comparison with this new marvel of ecclesiastical architecture, which arose at the bidding of the Anglo-Saxon Edward on the banks of the broad silvery Thames, just outside wealthy and prosperous London.

It was a cruciform church—the first of that peculiar shape, it is said, seen in England—and it became the model from which all churches were now designed: an expression, it has been well said, of the increasing hold which the idea of the Crucifixion had laid on the imagination of Europe in the tenth century. It was built upon strong foundations of large square blocks of grey stone. At the east end, which was comparatively short, was an apse containing the high altar. Over the choir rose a central tower, crowned with a cupola of wood and lead. The transepts stood out north and south. The stones were richly sculptured, and the windows, not of any great size, were filled with stained glass. To the west stretched the long nave, with its

two ranges of vast arches resting seemingly on huge columnar piers like those which still remain with us in the abbeys of Gloucester and of Tewkesbury. Two smaller towers for the reception of the bells apparently crowned the west end. Something of this kind we still see at Tewkesbury: at Gloucester these smaller towers, if they ever existed, have long disappeared. The roof was covered with lead.

The following description of the Westminster abbey of Edward the Confessor, penned by the author of the "Estoire de Saint Ædward," dedicated to Alianore, queen of Henry III., is no doubt strictly accurate. The writer was evidently one who knew and loved the abbey well, and had seen it and studied its details before it was destroyed to make room for Henry the Third's new and even statelier church. He was not improbably a monk of the Westminster monastery.

"Now he (Edward) laid the foundations of the church
With large square blocks of grey stone.
Its foundations are deep;
The front towards the east he makes round,
The stones are very strong and hard.
In the centre rises a tower,
And two at the western front.
And fine and large bells he hangs there,
The pillars and entablature
Are rich without and within;
At the bases and capitals
The work rises grand and royal;
Sculptured are the stones
And storied the windows;
All are made with skill
Of a good and loyal workmanship
And when he finished the work,
With lead the church completely he covers,
He makes there a cloister, a chapter-house in front,
Towards the east, vaulted and round,
Where his ordained ministers
May hold their secret chapter;
Refectory and dormitory
And the offices in the tower."

Of all this huge and splendid first structure but little now remains; it has almost entirely vanished, having given place to another and yet more splendid minster. "Possibly one vast dark arch in the southern transept, certainly the sub-structures of the dormitory with their huge pillars, the massive low-browed passage, leading from the great cloister to Little Dean's Yard, and some portions of the refectory and of the infirmary chapel, remain as specimens of the work which astonished the last age of the Anglo-Saxon and the first age of the Norman monarchy." * It will be well in this place to describe briefly how the great work of Edward the Confessor came to disappear.

The destruction of the glorious abbey of the saint-king, and the consequent loss of all its undying memories of Edward, of Harold, and the Conqueror, happened in this wise. King Henry III., on the death of his father, John Lackland, in 1216, had been crowned somewhat hurriedly in the Norman abbey of Gloucester—crowned, the story of the reign tells us, with a chaplet or garland in lieu of the crown, probably because the crown had been lately lost by his father John, in the waters of the Wash. Four years later it was thought well to repeat the solemn ceremony in the national sanctuary of St. Peter's abbey of Westminster. The day before his second coronation, the young king laid the foundation of a Lady Chapel at the east end of the Confessor's pile. This

* Dean Stanley: "Memorials of Westminster Abbey."

new and strange development of Christianity; this homage to, and which, alas! soon passed into the adoration of the Virgin Mother of our Lord, was a characteristic feature of the teaching of the early years of the thirteenth century. As years passed on, king Henry watched the progress of his second son was called Edmund, after the other royal Anglo-Saxon saint. In memory of the Confessor he finally determined to erect a new and splendid church, on the site of the abbey which contained the sacred remains of the object of his veneration. The new minster should

THE DARK CLOISTER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY, SHOWING EARLY NORMAN WORK.

his new work—the Lady Chapel. The palace of Westminster was his favourite residence. He loved to think he was the direct descendant of the great Alfred, and his ancestor Edward the Confessor was the favourite object of his imitation. He was the first of the Norman-descended kings who called his sons by the ancient Anglo-Saxon names. His firstborn he named Edward, after the adored Confessor, while possess as its hallowed centre Edward the Confessor's shrine.

It was in the year 1245, not quite two centuries after the consecration of the first mighty abbey, that the strange work of demolition began, Edward's own original abbey being literally torn down, as a building of no worth at all. The central tower, the transepts, the cloisters, the chapter-house, all disappeared; and in

place of the great Norman church, many of the features of which we can reproduce when we look on the nave of Gloucester and its partly veiled choir, arose the present Westminster Abbey, "the most lovely and lovable thing in Christendom." But it was a *new* minster altogether, of which St. Edward the Confessor became really the patron saint: St. Peter himself was almost forgotten, and since that day of demolition and of reconstructions few have cared to remember in connection with the abbey the name of the chief of the Apostles, in whose honour it was built. The reign of Henry III. dragged out its long, slow length, but although much was done, and before the king's death a glorious pile again occupied the site of the old abbey, the long reign closed before Westminster Abbey was completed. Indeed, it has never been completed. What we see now at the west end of the mighty church, the last five bays of the long nave, was the work of Henry's son, king Edward I.

But in this story of the building and rebuilding of the glorious abbey so loved of Englishmen, we have run on long years beyond the period we are engaged with, and must return again to the days of Edward the Confessor. There is a strange pathos in the scene which presented itself in the palace of king Edward, when the great minster which had engaged his thoughts and hopes for so long, was at last ready to be consecrated. It was the Christmas feast of the year 1065, when all the work of the West-Minster was ready for dedication. The Witan of England was summoned to London, to be present at the solemn hallowing of the mighty church, the crowning work of the saint-king's life. King Edward's strength was fast failing; strange dreams and awful portents, say the stories which grew up after his death, had warned him that the end was near. Weak and ailing though he was, he made a last effort to preside over the solemn assembly of the nation, and on Christmas Day, and the following 26th and 27th of December, the king was seen among his thanes and prelates, in his royal magnificence, and wearing his golden crown. The ceremony of consecration was fixed for the day following, December 28th, but when the morning of the consecration dawned, the king was unable to rise from his bed. The excitement and exertion of the three previous days had exhausted his little remaining strength, and the solemn rites were performed only in the presence of the queen, the lady Edith, who represented in the abbey the dying Edward. When the rite was over, the king, lying in the adjacent palace, heard the account of the august ceremony in silence; and then, so says one of his chroniclers, laid his wearied head on the pillow, as if to say, "*consummatum est*" (it is finished).

The sickness grew in intensity during the next five days; speech failed him, and the anxious bystanders thought the end was close at hand. It was a moment of intense anxiety for England. London was thronged just then by all the leading men and their followers, who had come up to attend the Witan, and at their king's request to witness the hallowing of the great abbey. They had met, and had held together brief counsel, and had witnessed the solemn rites which dedicated the abbey

to God; but alas! their master had himself been absent from the ceremony, and they now waited hour after hour for the awful news of his death. Every moment was precious, for England was threatened with two formidable invasions —by Harold Hardrada, the last Viking chief, from the north, and by William, duke of the Normans, the most brilliant and the ablest chief in Christendom, from the south.

Within the palace, in the royal bed-chamber, we read of three great men watching by the bedside of the dying Edward, and with them the queen Edith. They were Harold, earl of Wessex, Edith's brother; Robert, a Norman who filled the high office of Staller, or master of the horse; and Stigand, the archbishop of Canterbury. Of a sudden the king, who had been lying for two days speechless, was heard to pray. The little group of watchers caught the purport of the prayer; it was that strength might come to him to enable him to repeat an awful vision, which in his long slumber he had seen. "If the vision were from heaven," murmured the king, "grant me strength to utter it; if the dream were but the phantom of a sick man's brain, let me be mute." *

Strength seemed to come to the dying man; he sat up in his bed, the supporting arms of his faithful friend Robert the Staller around him. The moment was indeed a solemn one. Words were about to be uttered by a dying king deeply loved and venerated by his subjects, who was regarded by those about him, and by the people at large, as one who lived nearer God and the unseen world than did ordinary mortals. Hastily a few more of the chosen friends and counsellors from the ante-chamber were summoned to the royal bed-chamber. Their names, unfortunately, have not been preserved; it would have been of strange interest to know which of the Anglo-Saxon thanes and prelates were bidden to that solemn communication about to be made. These gathered round the bed, and with the renewed strength which had been given him, in a voice audible to the group of bystanders, king Edward told his dream.

"Many years ago," said the Confessor, "when I was a boy in Normandy, I knew two monks: most holy men they were, very dear friends to me. A long time has passed since these two dear friends have passed from all earthly cares. In my late deep slumber, I have seen them once more. God sent them again to me, to speak to me in His most holy name. 'Know,' said they to me, 'that they who hold the highest place in thy realm of England, the earls, the bishops, and the abbots, the men in holy orders of every rank, are not what they seem to be in the eyes of men. In the eyes of God they are but ministers of the Evil One. Therefore hath God put a curse upon the land, and hath given thy land over into the hand of the enemy. Within a year and a day from

* This vivid and startling story of the last moments of Edward does not stand, it must be remembered, on the same level with the other legendary stories in connection with the Confessor which have obtained so wide a currency; we shall come to speak of them presently. The authority for the death-bed scene rests on the almost contemporary prose life written for queen Edith very soon after the event took place, and the details came to him, the writer unobtrusively tells us, *from eye-witnesses of the scene* in the palace of Westminster—probably from Edith the queen herself.

thy departure, shall fiends wander through the whole country and shall waste it from one end to the other with fire and sword and robbery.' Then I spoke to them as follows: 'I would wish to tell of these things, which by God's permission will befall my people — perhaps repentance will follow, and its trunk; when it shall be carried away for the space of three furlongs from its root; when of itself, without human aid, it shall join itself again to its trunk, and shall blossom and bear fruit once more. Then, and not till then, shall a cessation of these great woes come to pass.'" *

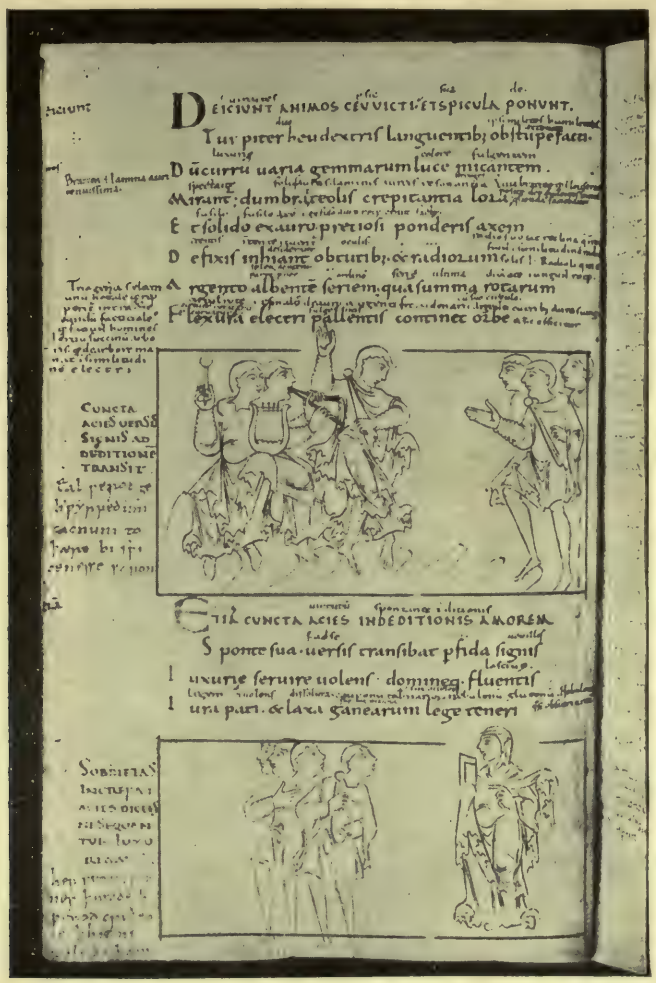
DEATH OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

God will have mercy on them. He had compassion on the men of Nineveh, when they repented after hearing the divine message which spoke of coming judgment.' 'No,' they said, 'they will never repent; neither shall God's pity fall upon them.' 'Then,' said I, 'what shall be the time or the manner in which we may look for an end to this threatened punishment?' They replied, 'In that day when a green tree shall be cut away from the midst of

The king said no more; Harold, Robert, and the queen, with the others who had been summoned to his bedside, stood awe-struck and mute. Only the archbishop Stigand remained undismayed at the dread prophecy, and at the wholesale denunciation of the chief men, the earls, and prelates, and clergy. He bent over and whispered to Harold not to heed, for

* Prof. Freeman's free rendering has been generally followed in the above.

the words were only the utterances of an old man worn with age and weakened by sickness (*submurmurat in aurem Ducis*



PAGE FROM THE "PSYCHOMACHIA" OF AURELIUS PRUDENTIUS, DESCRIBING THE SUBJECTION OF THE VICES BY THE VIRTUES.
(*From an English MS. of the 11th century.*)

senio confectum et morbo, quid diceret nescire). But the writer who so graphically describes the scenes, the details of which, it has been suggested, were supplied him by queen Edith herself—writing as he did in the early years which followed the slaughter of Hastings, when the miseries which ensued upon the Norman Conquest were crushing England—adds a few words descriptive of queen Edith's feelings, and the thoughts of some among the bystanders who had listened to the terrible denunciation. They, different from the sceptical

worldly-minded Stigand, were only too well aware of the sins of England, and the carelessness of some among the chief shepherds.

The "prophecy" of the dying king was undeniably a remarkable one, and was most strangely and accurately fulfilled. It must not be forgotten that the biographer of Edward, who tells the story, wrote in the early days of the Conqueror. Writing as he did a very few years after "Hastings" and the Conquest, he can well be imagined as representing the saint-king to have uttered prophetic words respecting that fatal Conquest, and the subsequent woes which came upon the Anglo-Saxon people. But he could *not* himself thus have foretold events which did not take place for more than sixty years after this Life of Edward was composed. For the fulfilment of the curious prophetic utterance is usually explained as follows: The tree removed from the root for the space of three furlongs signifies the crown transferred from the regular line of Cerdic and Alfred during the three reigns of Harold, the Conqueror, and Rufus. The tree returned to the root when Henry Beauclerc married Edith (Matilda), the grand-daughter of Edgar Atheling, the descendant of Edmund Ironside; it blossomed at the birth of Henry's daughter, the empress Maud; and bore fruit when Henry II. (Plantagenet) was born in 1133.

The king still lived, and during the little span of life yet left to him on that Thursday, the 5th of January, 1066, his speech continued clear, and his intellectual powers active. Death had no terrors for him. He gave some directions as to his burial in his abbey of Westminster, and his only selfish thought was to secure for his soul at the moment of its departure the prayers of the faithful. "Let my death be at once published everywhere," he said, "that all the faithful may at once call on the mercy of Almighty God for me, a sinner." Of his queen Edith, who stood weeping at the foot of the bed, he spoke with the utmost tenderness and love. "God," he told them, "would reward her for her good deeds in this world and in the next." Harold and Stigand, the archbishop, are represented by the writer as asking Edward to name his successor on the throne.* In reply to their question the king stretched out his hand towards Harold with the words—"To thee, Harold, my brother, I commit my kingdom." Before receiving the last communion at the hands of Stigand, he murmured in accents all could hear, "Fear not; I shall not die, but by the grace of God I shall quickly rise again well and strong." (*Ne timeas, non moriar modo, sed bene convalescam, propitiante Deo*). And when shortly afterwards the saint-king had breathed his last, men saw as it were stamped on the face of the dead man the glory of a soul which had passed at once into the presence of God, and was satisfied.

Edward the Confessor died on the eve of the Epiphany, January 5th, 1066. That same night the body was prepared for burial on the morrow, in his newly consecrated abbey of St. Peter's. It seems

* This is a point which bears upon the trustworthiness of the author of the "Life," for when he wrote Harold was dead, and Harold's bitterest foe and slayer, king William the Conqueror, was all-powerful in England.

at first as though the haste was unseemly. But the danger to the country was urgent: there was not one moment to lose. The morrow—the Epiphany—must see the burial of Edward and the coronation of Harold ; for Tostig and Harold Hardrada were threatening England on the north, and the mighty duke of Normandy on the south. Never did the land so urgently need a strong wearer of the crown. Gloomy indeed was the cloud which hung over the doomed island, on that eve of the Epiphany in 1066, when king Edward expired. With all haste, but with all reverence, the body of the royal saint was prepared for his tomb ; arrayed in his kingly robes, the crown upon his head, a golden crucifix suspended by a chain of gold about his neck, the pilgrim's stretched-out fingers more transparent than ever.

We have a contemporary representation of some of these scenes in the Bayeux tapestry. This wonderful tapestry, which so many travellers in Normandy have seen and admired in the public library at Bayeux, where it is stretched out round the room under glass, is generally accepted now by the more scholarly critics as a piece of contemporary work, and is used by writers on the period of Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror as one of the highest authorities. The favourite tradition is repeated by Sir Francis Palgrave.* "The tapestry which bears record of her husband's (William the Conqueror's) achievements, is a unique memorial both of his prowess and her

THE NORMANS BUILDING THEIR CAMP AT HASTINGS.
(*From the Bayeux Tapestry.*)

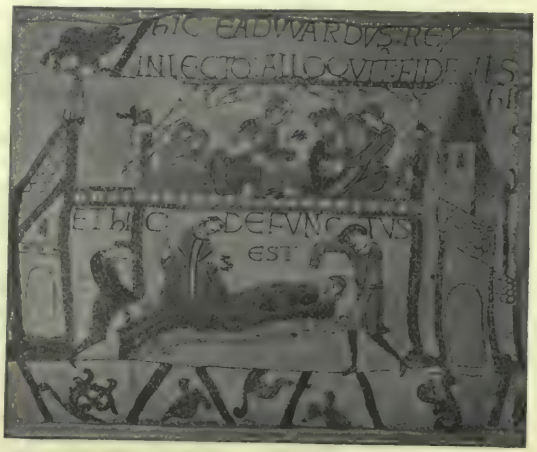
ring on his hand, the king lay ready for his last home. Edward looked, says his chronicler, in death as he had looked in life: he seemed even to smile, his long white beard seemed whiter, and the thin, (Matilda's) industry ; and the needles plied by herself and her damsels have assisted as much as the historian's pen in commemorating his victories."

* "Normandy and England."

It was, no doubt, worked in England. The word embroidered on one of its divisions, *Hasting-ceastra*, is decisive, as the peculiar form "ceastra" is nowhere to be found out of England, and in England we know that a famous school for these beautiful embroideries had long existed. It seems, from various local peculiarities, that it is now, as then, in its own home, *Bayeux;* having been worked for bishop Odo of Bayeux, the Conqueror's half-brother, who out of the spoils of England received the earldom of Kent. It was probably a gift from the great warrior-bishop as an ornament to his own newly-built cathedral of Bayeux. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the ancient tradition which assigns the tapestry to queen Matilda. Indeed, so vast and important a work could only be carried out in such a school of needlework as no doubt existed under her care and superintendence.

It has been suggested that the tapestry is unfinished, and was designed to go on to the coronation of William the Conqueror, and that its imperfect state is owing to Matilda's death in 1083. There is, however, no doubt but that this great piece of beautiful embroidery belongs to the period when the scenes it depicts were being acted, and that the designer of the tapestry had been an eye-witness of some of the scenes himself, and had received his information of others from persons who had taken part in them. Every antiquarian detail relating to the costumes, the armour of the fighting men, and of the horses, is correct. The soldiers of both armies are men-at-arms of the eleventh century, and nothing else. Every man, too, is represented bearded, moustached, or close-shaven, according to his age and nation. The very standard of Harold—the famous Wessex dragon—is depicted. The utter absence of horses in the English army, except as a means for reaching or leaving the field, is evidently the thought of an artist of the day.

It is therefore of great interest to find that the four eminent personages described in the contemporary memoir of Edward the Confessor, written for the widowed queen, are depicted in the tapestry in the picture of the king's death—viz. Harold, Stigand, Robert the Staller, and queen Edith. In that which represents the large and elaborately ornamented *loculus* or coffin of king Edward the Confessor in the burial scene, and



DEATH OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.
(*From the Bayeux Tapestry.*)

the rough but no doubt accurate sketch of the original abbey of St. Peter's, Confessor. Disaster upon disaster—ruin, confiscation, calamity, exile—followed in

THE COFFIN OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR BORNE TO WESTMINSTER ABBEY.
(From the Bayeux Tapestry.)

Westminster, we possess, doubtless, the exact representation of the royal coffin of the saint-king, and the abbey he built and which he loved so well, just *as they appeared* to the artist who designed the tapestry. The historical and antiquarian value of such pictures cannot be estimated too highly. The whole story, accurate though it be, is evidently told by a Norman artist, and that Norman artist evidently closely connected with Bayeux and its semi-royal bishop Odo.*

With wonderful rapidity, considering the tremendous change which passed over England within a few months of the king's passing away, and which, it might have been expected, would have thrown a veil of forgetfulness over the memory of Anglo-Saxon Edward, grew the fame of the

* Compare Freeman: "Norman Conquest," vol. iii., Appendix, notes A and B on the Bayeux Tapestry.

the wake of the Norman Conquest, but in spite of all, the reputation of the dead Edward—the last of the Anglo-Saxon monarchs—became more and more precious among the conquered people. The tradition of his extraordinary sanctity was prized also among the Norman conquerors, as well as among the Anglo-Saxon race. The reputed miracles at his tomb belong to the very first years of William's reign. Quickly the legendary stories belonging to his life on earth began to be told. So popular were these stories, that they soon passed into the literature of the time.

The earliest collected edition of these legends of the Confessor that we possess was made by Osbern, prior of Westminster. These were somewhat developed by Ælred (or Ethelred), a monk and afterwards abbot of Rivaulx. Ælred was born at Hexham in 1109, forty-three years after king Edward's death, and spent his youth with

Henry, son of king David of Scotland. Both these works were put out in the first half of the twelfth century, in less than a century after the saint-king's death. Ælred's "Life of the Confessor" must have been a very popular work, for there are numerous manuscripts of it existing in various libraries. Two, perhaps, of its best-known stories are remarkable for their singularity and the circumstantial nature of their details, and were probably based originally on some events which actually took place. They deserve to be related, firstly, because they throw light upon the character of Edward, and, secondly, on account of the popular testimony they bear to the way in which the king was remembered by the people of England. They evidently thought of Edward as one who, while in entire sympathy with the common folk, was yet in closer communion with the spirit world than ordinary men.

The first of these belongs to some period in the last years of his reign. The king was present at a state Easter banquet at Winchester. The great thanes and prelates were sitting round the festal board. Regardless of his guests, buried in his own thoughts, Edward was noticed to smile. Later in the day, in his private chamber, earl Harold and two ecclesiastics admitted to his confidence, ventured to ask their lord the reason why he smiled to himself at the banquet. He told them he had seen, as though in a vision, the seven sleepers of Ephesus, and, as he was looking, they turned in their slumber from the right hand to the left. So far, the story was probably a true memory of something that had actually happened. It shows us how the saint-king in his thoughts was so constantly in the habit of dwelling upon religious matters, that even in the midst of a royal banquet he would forget the present and dwell upon the themes which had so special an attraction for him. The latter part of the story belongs to the realm of fiction. It tells how a special embassy was sent to Asia to verify the facts of the royal vision. This was most probably a subsequent addition to the original narrative.

The second of these legendary stories is an illustration of Edward's sympathy with the poor of the people, and has for its scene the church of St. John at Clavering, where, on the occasion of the dedication ceremony, the king wishing to relieve a beggar-man who asked an alms, and having no gold or silver available, gives the suppliant a costly ring he was wearing. The story goes on to say how subsequently the ring was brought back to Edward by an English pilgrim from the Holy Land, with a message from St. John, who in the form of a beggar had asked the alms at Clavering and to whom Edward had given the ring. The purport of the message from the saint in glory to king Edward was, that as a reward for his generous, chaste life, he should within six months be with him in Paradise. As time went on the stories of the supernatural connected with this Anglo-Saxon monarch multiplied. In the long poem dedicated to queen Alianore about 1245, they form the most important part of the narrative.

The first monument erected was probably very plain, for the months which followed the death were indeed troublous ones. We read of the Conqueror, after the battle of

Hastings and the occupation of London, presenting two palls to be hung over the grave of his sainted kinsman. William, however, soon erected a more stately monument, which he decorated with precious metals. Very soon reports of miracles worked at Edward's tomb were noised abroad. Blind men were said there to receive their sight, the sick were healed, the sorrowing received comfort.

Six-and-thirty years after the first interment the rest of the holy dead was disturbed: men wished to look once more upon the face of the wonder-working saint. The coffin was exposed and opened in the presence of abbot Crispin of Westminster, and of Gundulf, the bishop of Rochester. The story of the opening of the coffin relates how a sweet savour filled the great minster church, and how as the garments of the grave were unwrapped, the body lay as in sleep, the skin was still white and rosy as in life, the limbs were still flexible. Bishop Gundulf tried in vain to pluck a hair from the dead king's snowy beard, to keep as a precious relic. After gazing a while, the bishop and abbot once more reverently covered the body, and the tomb was closed. This was in the year 1102.

Time passed on; thirty-eight years elapsed; the fame of the Confessor grew. Osbern, prior of Westminster, the well-known writer of Edward's life, and the chronicler of the many legendary stories which had grown up round his memory, endeavoured to procure from Pope Innocent II., in A.D. 1140, the decree which should formally canonise the saintly English king, and thus enrol him in the golden book of western Catholicism. But the coveted honour could not be obtained from Rome, where famous members of the Anglo-Saxon church were not regarded with peculiar favour. In the year 1161, however, the claims of Edward the Confessor to be recognised as a glorified saint by western Christendom were at length acknowledged by Pope Alexander III. The English advocates, both in church and state, of the merits of the holy Anglo-Saxon sovereign, were too powerful this time to be ignored. The archbishop-elect of Canterbury was Thomas à Becket, whose praise as a zealous and mighty ecclesiastic was already in all the churches; and the king of England was Henry II., the most powerful sovereign of his time, whose vast dominions stretched from Scotland to the Pyrenees.

In the year 1163 another and yet grander shrine for St. Edward was prepared by Henry II., the Plantagenet king. Henry II. and the archbishop assisted in lifting the wonder-working body into its new and stately resting-place. The royal robes which lay around the corpse were removed, and became precious vestments for the holiest rites of the sanctuary. The anniversary of that solemn translation is still preserved in the calendar of the Church of England.

Yet further honours, however, awaited the memory of Edward the Confessor. The rebuilding of Westminster abbey by Henry III. has already been described. In the centre of that matchless pile the king resolved that a shrine of hitherto undreamed-of magnificence should be henceforth the receptacle of the remains of the founder of the great church. No pains or cost were spared to render the new

sanctuary a fitting resting-place for the great Anglo-Saxon saint in whose honour the new abbey of Westminster was built and adorned. The most skilful craftsmen were brought from Italy, and the most precious materials were used for the gorgeous shrine; though the materials used

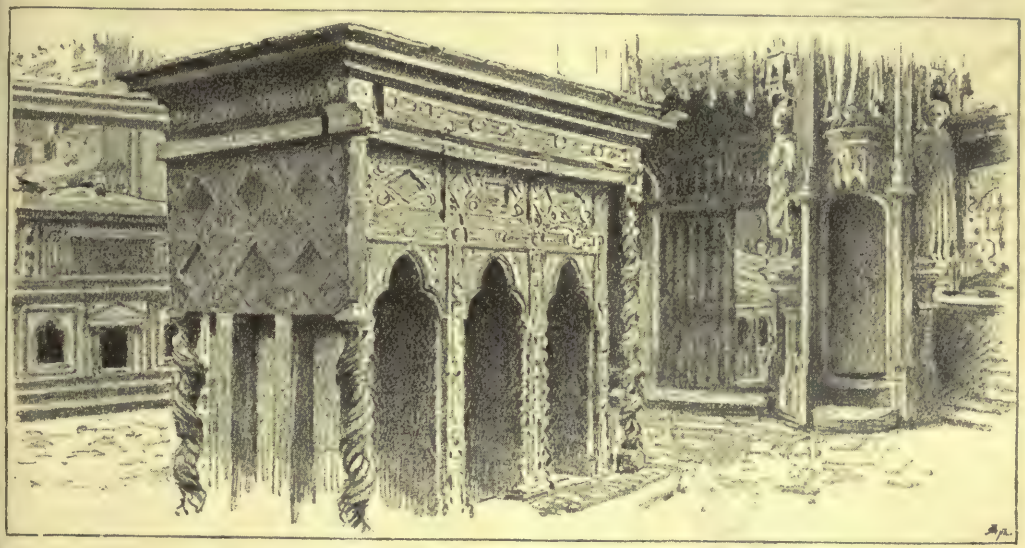
THE DARK CLOISTER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY, SHOWING NORMAN ARCH.

were costly and exceeding precious, we read that the workmanship exceeded even the materials used. The basement of the shrine was of marble and mosaic work, the superstructure was of wood overlaid by cunning goldsmith's work. The images which filled the niches of this marvellous piece of work were encrusted with gems, many of them exceedingly precious. It was finished in the year 1209, and once more the sacred body was translated to its new and splendid home. The most illustrious men in church and state—among them two kings and two kings' sons—helped to lift the coffin of Edward into the stately shrine which was reared in the centre of the royal English abbey. Succeeding kings—notably Edward I. and Edward II.—still further enriched with costly gifts this marvellous shrine of the Confessor.

But the highest honour was yet to come. To be laid near the holy body was deemed the highest privilege by successive sovereigns of the house of England. To this feeling is owing that unique group of kings and queens, who to this day keep watch and ward around the sepulchre of the last Anglo-Saxon sovereign of Cerdic's house. Close to him lie the remains of Edith his queen, king Harold's sister, and a yet more famous Edith, usually known as Matilda, queen of Henry Beauclerc, the lineal descendant of Alfred. In the circle of royal tombs around the shrine sleep Henry III., Edward I., and Edward III., Richard II. and Henry V.; the queens Eleanor, Philippa, and Katherine, Anne, the wife of Richard II., and Anne, the queen of Richard III.; and yet another queen of the same name, Anne of Cleves; and besides these a number of royal and distinguished personages more or less famous in English history. Never had an earthly sovereign such a court as the dead Confessor has gathered round him in his stately abbey.

When in the royal abbey of Westminster a stranger for the first time enters what is termed the "Chapel of the Kings," he is for a time awe-stricken at standing in the presence-chamber of the mighty

dead; for around him, beneath those ponderous monuments, sleep the kings and queens of England whose names have been with him since his child-days as "household words." There lies Edward the First, perhaps the greatest of English monarchs, and by his side the creator of the glorious abbey, Henry III. There sleeps the conqueror of Cressy, and at a little distance from him the conqueror of Agincourt: by the side of one of the warrior-kings is the hapless murdered Richard II. In the charmed circle, hard by the kings, rest eight of the English queens, each in her day and time the centre of the most brilliant court of Christendom. As the eye wanders over this storied chapel of the great dead, with the scarred and broken tombs, huge and grey in the dim light, the sad thought comes up unbidden, how poorly, after all, has our England cared for these stately memorials of her own greatest sons and daughters. The feeling of sorrow and regret deepens, at the sight of the pathetic wreck of the shrine raised high above the tombs of the sovereigns of England; the shrine which was the centre of all this faded regal splendour, in which still reposes the coffin of the holy king by whom the mighty abbey was built, the once adored saint of the English people, Edward the Confessor.



SHRINE OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

The story of the ruined shrine is as follows. From the year 1269, when Henry III. replaced the body in the new completed shrine, for some 269–270 years the remains of the saint-king were untouched. Succeeding kings, however, kept on beautifying and enriching with costly gifts the stately and superb tomb, the object of so much veneration. But in the storm which accompanied the dissolution and plundering of the monasteries.

the rich environment of Edward's sanctuary naturally excited the cupidity of king Henry VIII. and his ministers. Everything of value was plundered; the outer part of the work of Henry III., which held the coffin of the saint, was ruthlessly torn down; the coffin itself was re-interred in another part of the abbey; the lower part of the shrine, of marble and mosaic, sadly mutilated and defaced, was allowed to remain. This act of sacrilege seems to have been carried out in the year 1538. Queen Mary determined to restore the body of Edward to its old place. The ruined shrine was repaired, so far as the taste of the age would allow, and in the words of Feckenham, Mary's newly-appointed abbot of Westminster, "the body of the most holy king Edward—though the heretics had power on that wherein the body was enclosed, yet on that sacred body they had no power—was found and restored to its ancient sepulture" on March 20th, 1557. The marks of this hasty restoration are still visible in the broken mosaic and displaced cornice of the base. All the upper part had been broken when the gold and gems were plundered and the coffin removed. A new wooden canopy was placed over it; this canopy has never been finished. Probably Feckenham intended it to be overlaid with gold, and enriched with gems; but Mary's death stopped the work, and just as Feckenham left it, it remains to this day.

Shortly after the coronation of James II. in 1685, a rafter fell through the open woodwork, and broke the coffin. One Charles Taylor, who belonged to the choir of the abbey, having heard of the fracture in the lid of the coffin, went and secretly put his hand through the aperture, and, turning the bones which he felt there, drew out a crucifix, richly adorned and enamelled, and a gold chain of very ancient workmanship. This he presented to king James II. The precious relic was apparently stolen from the king in his hurried flight from England. The same Charles Taylor relates how at the time when he took the cross and chain out of the coffin, he drew the head of the king to the hole and viewed it. It was, he said, very sound and firm, with something in the nature of a gold coronet surrounding the temples; there was also in the coffin white linen and gold-flowered silk, but the least stress put thereto showed that it was well-nigh perished. Patrick, prebendary of Westminster, in his autobiography (quoted by dean Stanley) apparently refers to the same fracture in the coffin-lid, when he writes how some workmen employed in the abbey "chanced to have a look at the tomb of Edward the Confessor, that they could see the shroud in which his body was wrapped, which was mixed coloured silk, very frail." Taylor also relates "how his Majesty (James II.) was pleased, soon after the discovery (above related), to send to the abbey and order the old coffin to be enclosed in a new one, of an extraordinary strength, each plank being two inches thick and clamped together with large iron wedges."

It is apparently this outer coffin, ordered to be made by James, that is now visible in the shrine.

CHAPTER XXV.

ROME.

Vague Character of the Papal Supremacy in Anglo-Saxon Times—Terrible Corruption of the Papacy—Deposition of Benedict IX. by the Sutri Council—Election of Leo IX.—Influence of Hildebrand on the new Pope—Purification of the Papacy—Accession of Hildebrand as Gregory VII.—His Idea of a Ruling Papacy—His seeming Failure, but real Success—His Warfare with Simony in the Church—Suppression of Marriage among the Clergy—Cruelty of the Edict—Its Political Success.

DURING the Anglo-Saxon period, as we have seen, the influence of the Roman pontiff on the internal affairs of the Church of England had been very slight. Bishop Wilfrid of York in 678 and again in 704 formally appealed to Rome, in order to bring about his reinstatement in a diocese from which he had been expelled. But in the case of the first appeal the decision of the Roman bishop was contemptuously ignored; and in the second the partial reinstatement of Wilfrid was due rather to the policy and kindly feeling of archbishop Theodore, than to any formal recognition of the right of Rome to interfere in the government of the church in England. We certainly hear of no more of such appeals.

A vague recognition of the dignity of Rome as the "apostolic" see no doubt existed, principally manifested by the customary reception on the part of the Anglo-Saxon archbishops of a pall from the hands of the Roman prelate. This recognition of a vague supremacy seems to have been rarely, if ever, refused. There was also on the part of the Anglo-Saxon monarchs, a deferential friendship with the bishop of Rome, and now and again presents of money were sent to the Roman see; but these gifts were rather destined for the assistance of English pilgrims to the apostolic city, than intended for the Pope in person. Indeed, the connection between England and Italy was mainly kept up by the constant flow of pilgrims, often of the highest rank, from our island to the sacred shrines of Rome. This popular habit of pilgrimage was ever a marked feature, in all times, of the Anglo-Saxon race.

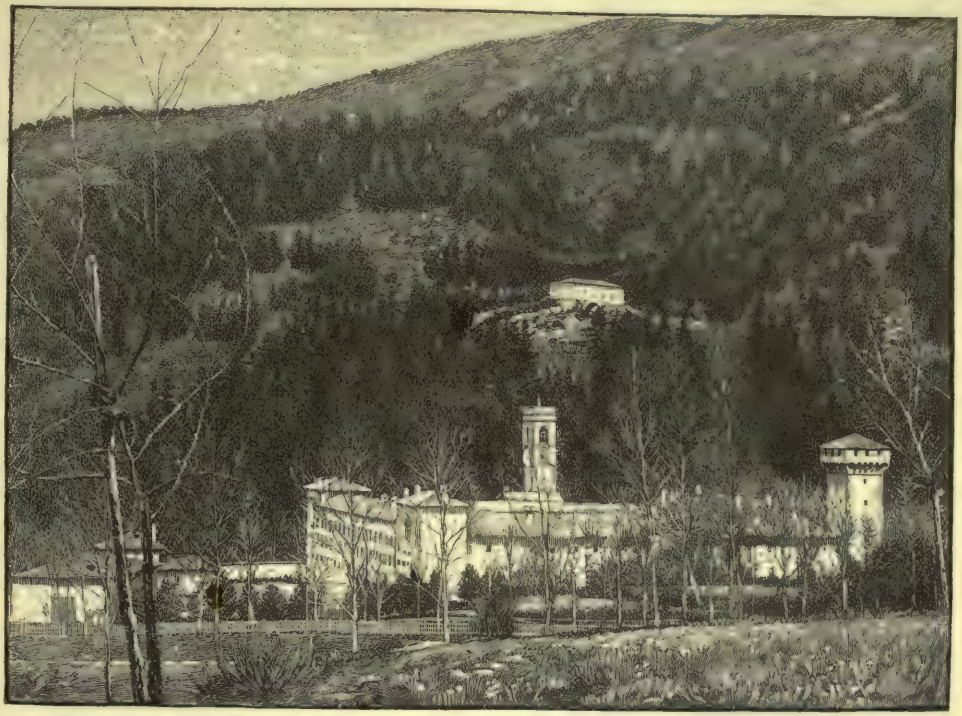
But anything like an acknowledgment of the right of the Pope to interfere in the affairs of the church, was absolutely unknown in Anglo-Saxon England. The rare apparent exceptions themselves bring this out with conspicuous clearness. Only twice have we any mention of legates, with an official mandate from Rome, appearing on English shores. The first and really solitary formal appearance of Roman legates among the English, was in the days of king Offa of Mercia, when the high-handed Mercian king admitted these foreign delegates to the council of Cealchythe in 786–787, and accepted this legatine interference to enable him to found the archbishopric of

Lichfield in his own kingdom of Mercia, and thus to maim and partly to destroy the power and influence of Jaenbert, archbishop of Canterbury—an arrangement which only lasted a very few years. The second appearance of legates was at the election of Wulfstan to the see of Worcester in 1062, when Edward the Confessor was king. But their presence on this occasion was accidental, and their influence and authority were scarcely acknowledged. The time, however, was at hand when the interference of Rome with the Church of England became an important factor in its story; and with the Norman Conquest, and under the Norman kings, there will be much to state concerning the claims of Rome to interfere in ecclesiastical matters—claims which were acknowledged for centuries by kings and prelates and religious houses in England. Meantime a brief sketch of Rome and its bishops will help us to understand something of the position of Rome as regards England, in the period which followed the death of Edward the Confessor, A.D. 1066. What had been happening in Rome during the tenth century and the first half of the eleventh, gives us a clue to understanding why she made no advance in her ever-growing claims for universal obedience, in distant countries like England, during that long period, and tells us the reason of the strange silence of her pontiffs.

CAMALDOLI

The expiration of the dynasty of Charlemagne and the final breaking up of his empire, may be roughly dated from the

year 888, when king Alfred was reigning in England. A period of anarchy, both in the empire and in the papacy, then set in. The following striking words sum up the degradation of the popes during the century and a half which followed the extinction of the Carlovingian dynasty. The writer is speaking of the popes who, during the age which then darkened upon Rome and Italy, ascended the apostolic throne. "Two were murdered; five were driven into exile; four were deposed; and three resigned their hazardous dignity. Some of these vicars of Christ were raised to that awful pre-eminence by arms, and some by money. Two received it from the hands of princely courtesans. One was self-appointed. A well-filled purse purchased one papal abdication; the promise of a fair bride another. One of these holy fathers pillaged the treasury, fled with the spoil, returned to Rome, ejected his substitute, and mutilated him in a manner too revolting for description. In one page of this dismal history we read of the disinterred corpse of a former pope brought before his successor to receive a retrospective sentence of deposition; and in the next we find the judge himself undergoing the same posthumous condemnation, though without the same filthy ceremonial. Of these heirs of St. Peter, one entered on his infallibility before his eighteenth year, and one before he had



VALLOMBROSA.

seen his twelfth summer. One again took to himself a coadjutor, that he might command in person such legions as Rome then sent into the field. Another, Judas-like, agreed for certain pieces of silver to recognise the patriarch of Constantinople as universal bishop. All sacred things had become venal. Crime and debauchery held revel at the Vatican; while the afflicted church, wedded at once to three husbands (such was the language of the times, there being three popes, each claiming the title, reigning at the same time in Rome), witnessed the celebration of as many rival masses in the metropolis of Christendom." *

In the language of another writer on this melancholy century and a half, "At Rome itself, the centre of Christendom, the vilest vices of the times of Tiberius or Caligula fiercely reappeared. It is almost incredible, the extent to which a frightful corruption there prevailed. The annalists of the Roman church stand aghast before it. 'The Pornocracy' or reign of harlots, is the terrible name by which a portion of it is described most accurately. Dean Milman's explanation of that terrible development is temperate and brief: 'This anarchy of Italy led to the degradation of the papacy; the degradation of the papacy increased the anarchy of Italy. . . Europe was resolutely ignorant what strange accidents, caprices, crimes, intrigues, even assassinations, determined the rise and fall of the supreme pontiff.' No Protestant prepossessions colour this picture. Even the learned and scrupulous Mabillon had to confess that most of the popes of the tenth century *lived rather like monsters or like wild beasts than like bishops.*" *

And in this long and shadowy line of Roman pontiffs, of whom one after the other "steals unnoticed into his dignity and departs from it unregarded, or rather is suddenly thrust into the throne by some act of violence, and as suddenly dispossessed by means as violent," only a very rare instance of a good and great man here and there occurs. Such was Gregory V., who during his short pontificate of three years, 996–999, was reputed to be a man of "holiness, wisdom, and virtue," but who was cut off in the flower of his age, it is believed by poison; or his successor, Gerbert, Silvester II., 999–1003, the most eminent prelate of his age, "in learning peerless, in piety unimpeachable," who died all too soon, also probably poisoned.

From this terrible, almost incredible degradation, which lasted, it must be remembered, *a century and a half*, from the days of Alfred to the times of Edward the Confessor, at last Rome emerged, and a very different class of men in succession began to occupy the papal chair. Benedict IX., who closed the seemingly endless succession of wicked popes distinguished for their weakness and incapacity, and many of them for their infamy, was cited to appear before a solemn council of the church, summoned by the emperor Henry III. to put an end to the awful scandal. The council met at Sutri in 1046, thirty miles north of Rome, and was attended by many prelates. Benedict and two anti-popes were forced to retire. The infamy of Benedict IX. was even conspicuous in

* Sir James Stephen: "*Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography.* Hildebrand."

* Dr. Storrs' Lectures: "*Bernard of Clairvaux.*"

the record of infamous bishops of Rome. Raised to the lofty but shamefully prostituted dignity at the age of twelve years, twice expelled from Rome by the outraged citizens, and driven into exile before the fierce loathing and hate of clergy and laity, he at last sold the papacy, and then reappeared again on the papal throne. It was to judge and condemn this Benedict IX. that the Sutri council was summoned by the emperor Henry III. Later Italian legends describe the shade of the pope as afterwards appearing in the form of a bear with the ears of an ass, and as grimly replying, when asked why he showed himself in this horrible form, "Because I lived without law or reason, God and Peter, whose see I contaminated by my vices, decree that I shall bear this image of a brute, not of a man."

Two strangers, Suidger, bishop of Bamberg, and Poppo, bishop of Brixen, under the names of Clement II. and Damasus II., filled the papal chair in succession, after the council of Sutri. They were men of austere life, blameless and holy, but they both rapidly succumbed to fever induced by the climate of Rome. Their successor was the famous Bruno, bishop of Toul, who, under the title of Leo IX., inaugurated a new state of things at Rome. He was elected to the papacy in the year 1048, when Edward the Confessor was reigning in England.

This is not the place to discuss at length the various causes which seem to have led to the gradual "Renaissance" in religion manifest before the middle of the eleventh century, one of its most striking effects being, of course, this great change in the character of the Popes of Rome. Gradually the state of anarchy into which Europe was plunged after the break-up of Charlemagne's empire, gave place to a quieter and more settled state of things. In the south, the Saracenic invaders ceased to terrorise the Mediterranean seaboard of Spain, France, and Italy. In the north, the yet more terrible Vikings had spent their strength, and gradually submitted to the influence of a civilisation they had so long harassed, and even threatened to destroy. In Germany and in the centre of Europe, the empire was partially re-established, and from the close of the tenth century was ruled by emperors of ability and power. In the centre of France, the rise of the house of Capet promised more settled and peaceful times; while Normandy and the adjacent territories on the west and east, under its mighty dukes, was growing rapidly into a rich and prosperous dominion. The story of Anglo-Saxon England has been already related. In many respects, under the strong kings of the house of Alfred, and later under Canute and Edward the Confessor, England had enjoyed a comparative freedom from the universal anarchy and confusion which more or less prevailed on the continent.

The great religious revival on the continent of Europe began in the monastic orders, as before related, in a small religious community founded as early as 912 by Berno, abbot of Beaune, at Cluny near Mâcon in Burgundy, in which a specially austere form of the rule of St. Benedict was practised. By the end of the twelfth century the congregation of Cluny, which had started into existence in 912 with twelve poor monks, at a period

when the wildest misrule prevailed and religious influence seemed dying, had developed into a mighty confraternity with no less than two thousand houses, spread over England and France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, all closely united to the mother monastery in Burgundy. And these were by no means alone. In the middle of the eleventh century monasteries may be said again to have become an enormous power in Europe, and from these reformed and re-invigorated religious houses emanated the spirit which inspired the long-degraded papacy with sanctity and power, and supplied the men who were the instruments of its reformation.

When Bruno, bishop of Toul, was elected to the papacy in 1048, he at once inaugurated a new and nobler rule at Rome. The circumstances under which he took his seat in the papal chair are remarkable, and deserve to be related as showing the new spirit which was now to inspire Romish church government. At the nomination of the emperor Henry III., and in a German synod, Bruno had been elected. Closely allied by family ties to the imperial dynasty, the bishop of Toul was famous far and wide for his holiness of life, his gentleness, and his boundless charity. He was no mean scholar, and was especially renowned as a preacher. On his way from Toul, whose graceful little cathedral travellers from Paris to Strasburg have often noticed without connecting it with the famous prelate Leo IX., the first of the great mediæval popes, Bruno stopped for rest and spiritual refreshment at Cluny, already celebrated as the centre of the fast-growing religious fervour which was influencing the western world. There he met the monk Hildebrand, at that time prior of the famous house. This extraordinary man, of whom we must speak presently with more detail, powerfully influenced the Pope-elect. Acting under the advice of Hildebrand, Bruno laid aside the insignia of the bishop of Rome, and in the humble garb of a pilgrim, with bare feet and lowly aspect, entered the Eternal City and submitted to a re-election on the part of the Roman clergy and people. From this time forward Hildebrand was the adviser and minister of Pope Leo IX. and of his successors, till the time came when, by universal acclaim, he took his own seat on the chair of the chief pontiff, under the world-renowned name of Pope Gregory VII.

The influence of the new Pope, Leo IX., was at once felt not only in Rome, but all through western Christendom. For the first time for about a century and a half, the power of Rome again became a reality. Leo IX. was at once a saint and a wise ruler. He devoted himself with an untiring industry to reform the many abuses which disgraced and weakened the church. Nor were his ceaseless and successful endeavours by any means confined to Rome, or even to Italy. "Leo IX. came forth to Europe not only with the power and dignity, but with the austere holiness, the indefatigable religious activity, the majestic virtue which became the head of Christendom. . . . Wherever he went (and his travels extended over large portions of northern and central Europe), he visited the most severe of the clergy or of the monastic orders. Men already sainted by popular devotion, at such centres at Clugni and Vallombrosa, . . . all recognised

a kindred spirit, and hailed the genuine pontiff."* He held a council at Pavia. He crossed the Alps to Germany, and held an important council for church reform at Rheims in France, and then presided over a German council of yet greater magnitude at Mainz. With the Leo IX. His immediate successors carried on faithfully his aims and his work. Victor II., who followed him, was an equally zealous reformer. Stephen IX. and Nicholas II., the next occupants of the Roman see—still under the guidance of that Hildebrand of whom we have already

TOMBS OF THE POPES, IN A CRYPT OF ST. PETER'S AT ROME.

renovation of the papacy, a new spirit had indeed come over and was inspiring the western church.

We are not in this history concerned with the lives and troubles, with the various episodes of success and failure, of the occupants of the so-called chair of St. Peter. It must suffice us simply to chronicle the fact, of the great revival and enlargement of the papal tradition under spoken—carried on the great task begun by Leo IX. Alexander II., whom we shall hear of as the faithful ally and steady supporter of William the Conqueror, was the last of the famous group of papal disciples of Hildebrand; who, when Alexander II. died, at last assumed himself the position of Pope, under the title of Gregory VII., in 1073. He raised the great office to a pinnacle of glory and authority hitherto undreamed of even by the most ambitious

* Milman: "Latin Christianity," book vi., chap. 1.

and far-seeing of the long line of occupants of the Roman see.

The idea that something of a supreme authority over all other churches—something of a superior sanctity beyond all other sees—belonged to the see of Rome, must have been for a long period deeply

POPE LEO IX.
(*From an Old Print.*)

ingrained in the mind of Christendom, and could alone account for the fact of the survival of such veneration for Rome and its bishops during the century and a half of awful degradation and misrule through which it had passed. Immemorial tradition, carefully enlarged by successive generations of Roman bishops and their ministers, connected this great see directly with St. Peter and his companions; and no temporary hiding of its power and surpassing influence, had any permanent effect on the estimation in which the mother see of western Christendom was generally held. "However the churches of Europe might bow down in shame and sorrow at the inscrutable decrees of Heaven in allowing its vicegerent thus to depart from his original brightness, yet they would veil their faces in awe, and wait in trembling patience the solution of that mystery."* Indeed, that profound scholar and copious writer, Cardinal Baronius, founds a striking argument for the Divine authority of the Papal church, on the fact that it continued and still extended, in spite of such monstrous iniquities, abhorred of all men, as for generations were enthroned at the head of it, staining it, he admits, with ineffaceable defilements.

But while the fact is conceded that all this real, though possibly somewhat undefined general reverence and attachment to the see of Rome and its pontiffs had existed for ages, it remains true that the present position of the papacy (whose real splendour and power and awful grandeur only began at this juncture, in the middle of the eleventh century) owes a vast debt to one man of supereminent genius, whose magnificent conception of the work and office of the holders of the so-called see of St. Peter raised the bishops of Rome to that lofty position in the church and the world to which they attained in his pontificate, and which even after eight centuries and a half, with certain modifications, they still occupy in Roman Catholic countries.

In the earlier part of the eleventh century, Hildebrand, the son of a Tuscan carpenter, was brought up in a monastic house in Rome—St. Mary on the Aventine. In the year 1048 we find him occupying the important position of prior of the great and rising monastery of Cluny in

* Dean Milman.

Burgundy. Already thoughtful churchmen saw in the young Cluniac monk the promise of future greatness, for he was reputed to have made himself master of all the knowledge of the times. Over Bruno of Toul, known as Pope Leo IX., the restorer of papal sanctity and influence, Hildebrand obtained, as we have already seen, an enormous influence. He accompanied Leo to Rome, and became his chief minister and confidential adviser; a position he maintained with ever-increasing power and renown under Leo's successors in the papacy, directing their policy and guiding their action, until, at the death of Alexander II. in the year 1073, when William the Conqueror was firmly established on the English throne, he was called by universal acclamation to seat himself in the papal chair. Any detailed history of his eventful career does not belong to our present work; but so great was the influence which he and his successors exercised upon the Church of England after the Norman Conquest, that it is necessary to form some conception of the nature of the spiritual domination which Hildebrand claimed to possess, and eventually succeeded to a large extent in exercising, over all the western churches, among which England was reckoned.

The mind of this greatest of the Popes, the real founder of the rule which they exercised in the Middle Ages, is well summarised in the following words—"He [Hildebrand] had, as Pope Gregory VII., become the supreme vicar of Christ on earth, the mortal head of an immortal dynasty, the depositary of a power delegated yet divine, the viceroy to whom had been entrusted by God Himself the care of interests and the dispensation of blessings and curses, which, by comparison, reduced to inappreciable vanities all the good and evil of this transitory world . . . . Before his prophetic eye arose a vast theocratic state in which political and religious society were to be harmonised, or rather to be absorbed into each other. At the head of this all-embracing polity the bishop of Rome was to exert his legitimate authority over all the kings and rulers of the earth." * The vastest empires of the earth might, as had been seen in past ages, entirely pass away; but the *church* was as permanent as it was all-embracing. And of the church the bishop or Pope of Rome was the chief minister; to the fulfilment of this awful and incomparable office he had been called.

POPE GREGORY VII. (HILDEBRAND).
(*From an Old Print.*)

The "Dictates" promulgated by Hildebrand at the council of Rome in 1076 as

* Sir James Stephen: "Essays in Ecclesiastical History: 'Hildebrand.'"

presenting fundamental maxims of the church, express and illustrate his whole theory. Some of the more important of these are as follows :—

"The Roman Church is founded by God alone.

"The Roman pontiff is justly called universal.

"His legate takes precedence of all bishops in a council, though he be of inferior rank, and he has power to pronounce against them the sentence of deposition.

"The Pope may depose those absent from such a council.

"All princes shall kiss the feet of the Pope.

"It is lawful for him to depose kings and emperors.

"No council may be called a General Council without the Pope's order.

"No capitulary, no book can be esteemed canonical without his authority.

"His sentence can be revoked by no one, and he alone can revoke the sentences of all others.

"He can be judged by none.

"No one may dare to pronounce condemnation on one who appeals to the apostolic see.

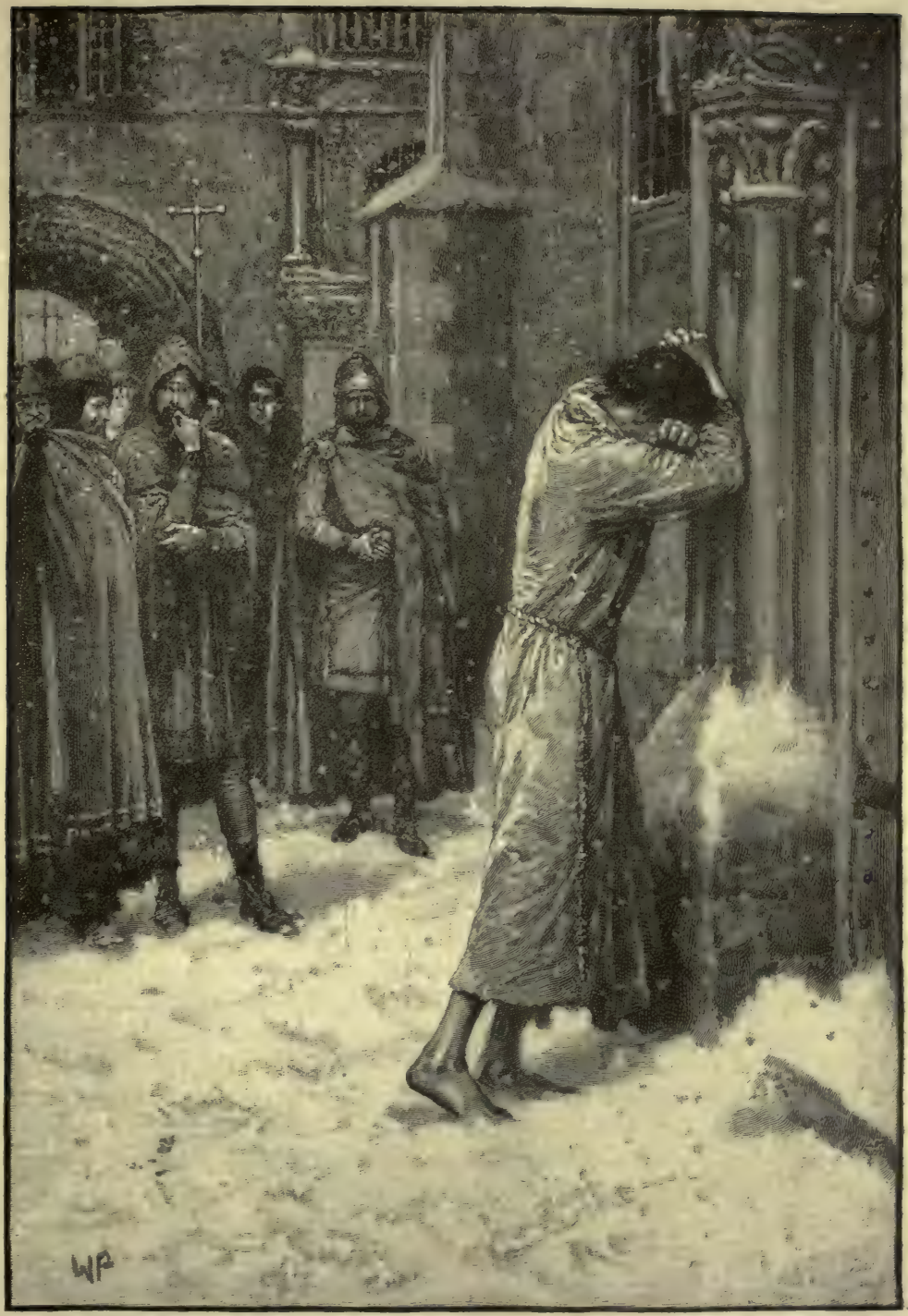
"The Roman Church has never erred, nor for ever more will it err, the Scripture remaining, however.

"Without convening a synod, he (the bishop of Rome) may depose or reconcile bishops.

"No one is to be esteemed a Catholic who does not wholly accord with the Roman Church."

Such was the outline of the scheme which Hildebrand, as Pope Gregory VII. (1073–1085), definitely set forth before the church and the world. He claimed for the papacy the greatest conceivable authority on earth; and this was the authority *claimed*, and often exercised, as we shall see, in the Church of England after the Norman Conquest. All priests, all monks, were to be his obedient servants, while special legates nominated by him were to act as his ministers in the court and in every council.

This extraordinary man, who succeeded to a great extent in establishing this tremendous and enduring power in western Christendom, has been variously judged. His burning earnestness to reform and change much in the church of his day and time that he felt to be wrong and base, awoke an intensity of hatred on the part of many whose lives he attacked, rarely aroused even in this world, ever jealous and prompt to act when its interests are threatened. He was accused of arrogance and of unbridled ambition, and even of want of truth and reality. The strangest of the many bitter things that have been said of Hildebrand, were uttered by his dear friend Peter Damiani, the austere ascetic, at once affectionate and ironical, when he called him "St. Satan." On the other hand, to writers of the school of Montalembert, the ardent Romanist, the character of the great Pope is simply sublime. This school dwells on the nobleness and purity of his soul, and eloquently describes the utterances of Hildebrand as "memorable and blessed words, truly worthy the pen of a Pope and the heart of a saint, and which fill up the measure of that ineffable joy which rushes over every Catholic soul at the sight of a



THE EMPEROR HENRY IV. DOING PENANCE AT POPE HILDEBRAND'S GATE.

courage so heroic, crowned by charity so invincible."

Without endorsing the rapturous encomiums of Montalembert, or the fervid laudations of the Romanist, who sees in the maintenance of the Papacy, with its tremendous claims, the only hope of the salvation of mankind, and who gratefully acknowledges Hildebrand as the foremost champion of his creed, the fair-minded historian must recognise in this great man intense earnestness, splendid devotion, and matchless self-sacrifice. He renounced pleasure, ease, safety, and made his whole life an offering to elevate and to sanctify the church he loved and served. The words of the great English historian of the Latin church, with their conspicuous fairness and moderation, joined with a chivalrous appreciation of the mighty work really accomplished by the lofty conception of Hildebrand, admirably express the feeling which at present inspires the more generous sons of the Church of England towards the Papacy and its wondrous story —a story which by no means only belongs to the past.

The writer sums up his estimate of the papal power as created by Hildebrand (Gregory VII.) by conceding this idea to have been magnificent; but he asks "how it was reconcilable with the genuine sublimity of Christianity, that an order of men, that one single man, should thrust himself between man and God—should array himself, in fact, in secondary divinity?" He paints the awful incongruity between the churchman and the Christian; between the alleged representative of the Prince of Peace and the Prince of Peace Himself; and then he goes on to say, "Yet in a lower view, not as a permanent, eternal, immutable law of Christianity, but as one of the temporary phases through which Christianity was to pass—the hierarchical, the papal power of the Middle Ages" has been of immense benefit to mankind, "by its conservative fidelity as guardian of the most valuable relics of antiquity, of her arts, her laws, her language; by its assertion of the superiority of moral and religious motives over the brute force of man; by the safe guardianship of the great primitive and fundamental truths of religion, which were ever lurking under exuberant mythology and ceremonial; above all, by wonderful and stirring examples of mortification and self-sacrifice and self-discipline, . . . by splendid charities, munificent public works, cultivation of letters, the strong trust infused into the mind of man, that there was some being, even on earth, whose special duty it was to defend the defenceless, to succour the succourless. . . . All these things, with all the poetry of the Middle Ages in its various forms of legend, of verse, of building, of music, of art, may justify or rather command mankind to look back upon these fallen idols with reverence, with admiration, and with gratitude. The hierarchy of the Middle Ages counterbalances its vast ambition, rapacity, cruelty, by the most essential benefits to human civilisation. The Papacy itself is not merely an awful but a wonderful institution. Gregory VII. (Hildebrand) himself is not contemplated merely with awe, but in some respects, and with great drawbacks, as a benefactor to mankind." *

It has been well said that "effort is

* Milman: "Latin Christianity."

more valuable than achievement," and that "the real value of a man's work is not to be tested by the immediate visible results"; and further, that "it is not what a man *does* that exalts him, but what a man *would do*." This was conspicuously the case with Hildebrand; for after a life spent in ceaseless toil and endeavour, after being elevated to the loftiest dignity in Christendom, after seeing the reforms which he judged absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the life of the church largely carried out, after witnessing the strange spectacle of the emperor, the greatest potentate in the western world, as a suppliant clad in a thin penitential garment, with bare feet, waiting during three cold winter days at his gates for a word of pardon and reconciliation from his lips—we see the strange spectacle of this Pope, an old man worn out with never-ending toil and care, dying an exile from Rome, a fugitive from his enemies, seemingly a broken and defeated man, and murmuring with his last breath to a group of devoted friends standing round his death-bed, "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore I die in exile."

The failure was, however, only a seeming failure. The man, weak and sickly, of slight frame and small stature, it is true died an exile and a fugitive, watched over by strangers and a few devoted friends; justifying to the last the righteousness of his works and days, but lamenting bitterly with his last breath the sad guerdon of desertion and exile which the world had bestowed upon him as a return for all his life-long labours and sacrifice. But as for *the work* to which he gave his life, it has endured; it endures still, and, as far as we can see, shows no sign of cessation, but little mark of decay. The spiritual kingdom, the foundations of which he laid more than eight centuries ago, has been, all through the changes of that long and eventful period, a most important factor in all history, civil as well as ecclesiastical. For good or for evil, this mighty influence still broods over all lands, and has to be reckoned with even by peoples who utterly decline the communion of Rome. Hildebrand the Restorer—we should say more truly the Creator of the Papacy—"is celebrated as the reformer of the impure and profane abuses of the age; he is more justly entitled to the praise of having left the impress of his own gigantic character on the history of all the ages which have succeeded him."*

Of the "impure and profane abuses" above referred to, which dishonoured the church and most gravely marred her usefulness, and against which Hildebrand and the men of his school warred an implacable warfare—a warfare attended by considerable success, the first and principal and most dangerous abuse was the fatal and widely-extended sin, termed "simony." This age has little conception of its prevalence and of its frightful consequences to the church in the eleventh century—the age of Hildebrand. The evil had grown up during that long period, lasting more than a century and a half, during which anarchy and confusion had existed in all the countries of Europe. Episcopal sees were bought and sold. They were often conferred on the children of princes and powerful men at a tender age, when they were utterly unfit to perform even

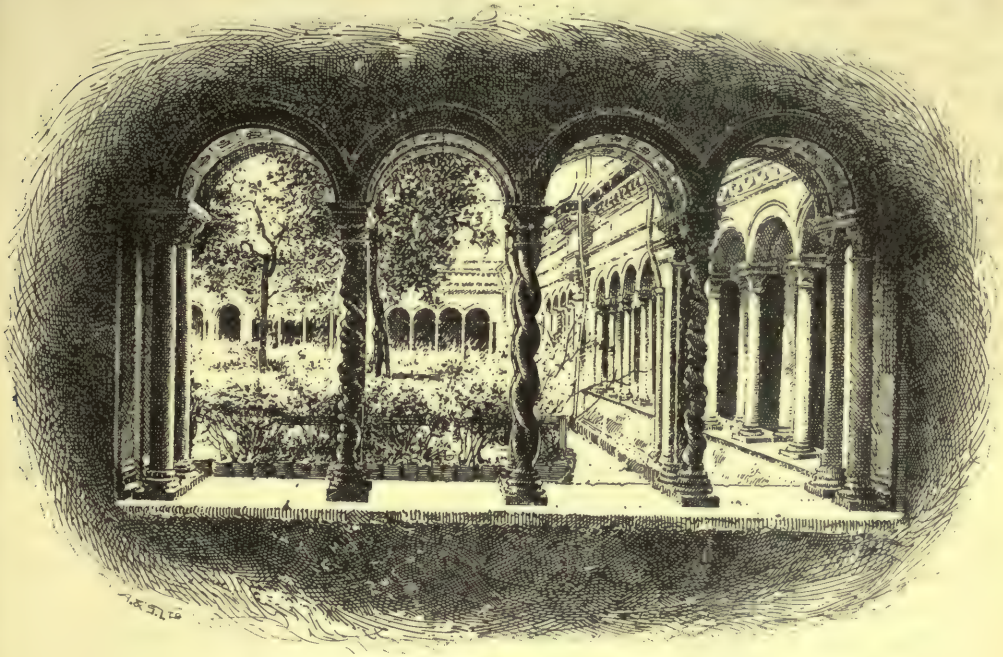
* Sir James Stephen's Essays: "Hildebrand."

the humblest duties of the priesthood. Too often the prelate who had purchased at a great price his see from the sovereign, endeavoured to recoup himself for the outlay by selling in his turn the inferior prebends or cures. Councils of the church and popes of Rome had perpetually denounced this terrible abuse; but pope and council for a long time had been too weak, perhaps too tainted themselves, to enforce the anathemas they judged it expedient to launch against the sharers in this shameful traffic. Thus the evil grew instead of diminishing. When the Popes under the influence of Hildebrand, and later, Hildebrand himself, aided by the ever-increasing power of the reformed monastic orders, with hands strengthened by their own austere lives and holy example, took the matter in hand in good earnest, they found the whole church literally honeycombed by this strange and fatal practice. The highest bishops confessed their guilt. In the dark days of the tenth century, the very bishopric of Rome had been notoriously bought and sold.

To give one striking instance. The bishop of Florence, in the year 1060, was accused of having notoriously bought his important bishopric for a great sum through the intervention of his father. The father, when questioned as to the transaction, replied, "There is not so much as a mill to be had from the king without paying money; so for the bishopric of Florence I had to pay 3,000 livres"—an enormous sum in those days. This almost universal simony was now generally acknowledged to be a crime; but it was no light task which Hildebrand set himself, to purge the church of such crying iniquities. Peter Damiani, the austere friend of Hildebrand, does not scruple to call such simonical prelates "heretical brigands," and tells us it was even easier to convert a Jew than to bring such sinners to repentance. But after the middle of the eleventh century a very different state of things was introduced into the church, under the new rule and example of the better popes, and the stern and self-denying teaching of the reformed religious houses in every country of Europe.

That the wave of this degrading and almost inconceivable sin of simony, which in its worst and most exaggerated form corrupted the church on the Continent in the tenth and first half of the eleventh centuries, also passed over the Church of England, is indisputable. Indeed, it is scarcely thinkable that so general a degradation could have existed in the continental churches, without more or less affecting England. There is no doubt but that in the short reigns of Harold and Harthacanute, the evil sons of the religious Canute, simony to some extent existed; for we read of Stigand, afterwards archbishop, at that time the priest of Canute's church of Assandun, being appointed to a bishopric in the reign of Harold Harefoot, but deposed, seemingly before consecration, because another competitor for the see was prepared with a larger sum. In the days of his brother Harthacanute, when that king was keeping the midwinter festival at Gloucester, Edmund, bishop of Durham, died at the court. Harthacanute sold the see of Durham to a priest of the name of Edred. One of the chroniclers relates how this Edred at the time appointed for his installation fell suddenly ill and died.

Even in the days of Edward the Confessor the practice—so justly abhorred in all times by true servants of the church—of purchasing preferment was not unknown; but no shadow of suspicion of countenancing this shameful procedure rests upon king Edward or his chief minister, earl Harold.



BYZANTINE CLOISTERS IN BASILICA OF ST. PAUL, ROME.
(Rebuilt by Gregory VII. in the Eleventh Century.)

They appear to have been absolutely opposed to simony in any form. The way however, in which these acts are noticed by chroniclers, clearly shows that simony, while it was not unknown to a certain extent among the less noble and conscientious clergy and laity in England, never existed in the Anglo-Saxon church to the fearful extent to which it prevailed in Italy and on the continent of Europe.

The other great "abuse" or "prevalent sin," against which Hildebrand warred was of a very different complexion. One of the distinguishing characteristics of Latin Christianity ever since the closing years of the fourth century, when Jerome largely guided the counsels of Rome, was an enforced celibacy among the men set apart for the service of the altar. Based originally upon St. Paul's words, which dwell upon the greater usefulness, the more entire devotion of men so set apart to Christian society, if they were entirely unfettered by the cares and duties and grave responsibilities of domestic and family life, celibacy by degrees assumed the position of a virtue, and seemed to justify those who practised it in assuming a dignity and authority superior to the rest of mankind. In

the Latin church, in Rome, and in the foreign churches in communion with Rome, the policy of the men who guided the church was in every possible way to discourage and even to forbid marriage among the clergy. This policy had gone on for several centuries. It had been stoutly opposed by the majority of the clergy in all lands; and, indeed, everywhere the married clergy formed the majority. We have seen how bitterly the attempt to force celibacy on the priests of England had been resented in the days of Dunstan. It became certainly a law of the church, but a law which was defied, infringed, eluded in every conceivable way, and which had never obtained anything approaching to general observance in any of the countries belonging to Latin Christianity. The existence of the law against the marriage of the clergy, and the prejudice which centuries of teaching on this subject had naturally created, led to a vast number of illicit connections on the part of the priests. Marriage for them was condemned by the church. It would probably, if entered upon, be a bar to their advancement in their own order, if not a hindrance to their usefulness; hence the alarming prevalence of unblessed unions among the secular clergy. The anarchy and confusion in the church and among the nations during the past hundred and fifty years had tended vastly to increase this state of doubtful morality among the vowed servants of God. And it is certain that when Hildebrand lived and worked, the moral condition of many of the clergy in the churches of the west was deplorable, and indeed sorely required a stern and upright reformer.

But mere reformation of the moral tone of the clergy was not what Hildebrand aimed at. He waged war with equal bitterness and determination against the lawfully married priests, as with the multitude of their brethren in holy orders who lived in open concubinage. To Hildebrand it appeared as absolutely necessary for the work of that church of the future of which he dreamed, that her officers should be trained to renounce the world and its affections and ties—even legitimate and holy ties—and, possessing neither home or country, to devote themselves wholly to the service of the church, and the promotion of her interests and power. Nor was this in Hildebrand's case the policy of a mere selfish and ambitious priest. It was alone through the existence and work of the church of which he dreamed, as he believed, that the earthly weal and the eternal salvation of mankind could be secured.

With this in his mind, only a few weeks after he had become Pope Gregory VII., Hildebrand summoned a council to meet at the Lateran, and promulgated a law, not merely simply forbidding the marriage of priests, but commanding every priest to put away his wife; bidding the faithful laity besides, to shun all sacred offices at which any married priest dared to celebrate. And the enormous influence which the commanding genius of Hildebrand had won throughout western Christendom actually succeeded in carrying into effect this stern decree, which was promulgated far and wide. Innumerable pure and happy priestly homes were broken up; for moral and immoral clergy were equally denounced by the large majority of church rulers,

fascinated or persuaded against their will by the great Pope. The task was not accomplished without difficulty. Archbishops were even stoned in their pulpits when they read the decree of Rome. Abbots were dragged from their assemblies and scarcely rescued alive. A hatred unprecedented was roused against the great author of the stern and unbending law; and no doubt the eventual fall and death of Hildebrand in a lonely exile, was the earthly guerdon he received for enforcing this tremendous sacrifice from the church whose devoted minister he was.

But, though Hildebrand was allowed to die in exile disregarded and unhonoured, his work was done—successfully done. "Never was legislative foresight so verified by the result." What former councils of world-wide notoriety, what mighty statesmen-archbishops, what scholars and teachers whom the Christian world has never ceased to honour and to applaud had attempted, but attempted in vain, Hildebrand succeeded in accomplishing at once, effectually, and for ever. There was a terrible struggle, as may well be conceived, against carrying out the decree of Rome; how terrible can be conceived when the number of married clergy at this time is taken into account. To give one instance: when Herlwin, the founder of the monastery of Bec—Bec, the home afterwards of Lanfranc and Anselm—first betook himself to the monastic life, in the year 1037, an unmarried priest or bishop was hardly to be found in Normandy. Eloquence against carrying out the cruel decree of Hildebrand "was never more pathetic, more just, or more unavailing. Prelate after prelate silenced these remonstrances by austere rebukes. Legate after legate arrived with papal menaces to the remonstrants. . . . It was a struggle not to be prolonged. Broken hearts pined, and died away in silence. Expostulation subsided into murmurs, and murmurs were drowned in the general shout of victory. Eight hundred years have since passed away. Amidst the wreck of laws, opinions, and institutions, this decree of Hildebrand's at this day rules the Latin church in every land where sacrifices are still offered on her altars. Among us but not of us, valuing their rights as citizens chiefly as instrumental to their powers as churchmen, . . . the sacerdotal caste yet flourishes in every Christian land, the imperishable and gloomy monument both of that far-sighted genius which thus devised the means of papal despotism, and of that short-sighted wisdom which proposed to itself that despotism as a legitimate and laudable end."*

* Sir James Stephens: "Hildebrand."

CHAPTER XXVI.

LANFRANC, WILLIAM, AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

Brief Reign of Harold—Brilliant Victory over the Danes—Duke William of Normandy—Relations of Harold and William—The Invasion a "Holy War"—Norman Conquest—Lanfranc—His Early Life—Influence regarding the Doctrine of Transubstantiation—Becomes Primate of England—His Stainless Character and Popularity—Changes the Character of the Church of England—Ecclesiastical Courts—Greater Subjection to Rome—Celibacy Enforced—Changes in Bishoprics—Outburst of Church-building—Probably Churches of Expiation—Norman Architecture—Establishment of Uniform Ritual—The Domesday Book—Death of William—Death of Lanfranc.

HAROLD, the son of Godwin, the earl of Wessex, the faithful adviser and brother-in-law of Edward the Confessor, was chosen king by the unanimous voice of the Witan of England, and was solemnly crowned in the new abbey of Westminster on the very day (January 6th, 1066) which had witnessed the interment of Edward in the same new abbey. His reign lasted only nine months, and it witnessed two formidable invasions, the fate of each being decided by a long-contested and bloody battle. The story of England—we may well say the story of the world—has been coloured by the events of that short sad reign.

As a king, a statesman, and a military commander, Harold must always be classed in the first rank. He appears in the testimony of contemporary English records as an almost perfect patriot monarch; wise, far-seeing, devoted to his country's good, a strong defender of law and order, a firm friend to the church. His melancholy fate was simply owing to the fact, that the almost simultaneous *double* invasion by such mighty foes, was more than Harold's forces were able to cope with. The brilliant and decisive victory in the north had cost him dearly, and his thinned ranks, when brought face to face with the second foe, were simply too few in number. "It was the fate of England in this memorable year to be exposed to two invasions at the same moment; and against two invasions," writes the great panegyrist of the last Saxon king, "the heart and arm of Harold himself could not prevail." Neither skill nor bravery was lacking to Harold and his army at Hastings. It was simply that the foes were too numerous. After that long day's fighting scarcely any real warrior of the English army survived! They had fought to the last and to the bitter end.

During the early months of his reign king Harold was busy preparing for the dreaded invasions. He knew that he had deadly foes in the north; he knew, too, that duke William was busy preparing in the south to seize the coveted English crown. But in the midst of his war preparations, he by no means neglected the interests of the Church of England. His famous educational foundation of Waltham he further endowed and carefully watched over. One of his favourite advisers was Ethelwig, the wise abbot of the important monastery of Evesham, at the foot of the

Cotswold hills; but his dearest friend and counsellor was the saintly bishop Wulfstan of Worcester.

Wulfstan had been his intimate associate for years, and in company with him, during the few short months of comparative peace, he journeyed into the north, and with great skill pacified the turbulent inhabitants of Northumberland, who showed signs of disaffection and disloyalty. It will be remembered that in the late reign Tostig, Harold's brother, a favourite and friend of Edward the Confessor, had ruled over Northumbria; but had contrived to win the hate instead of the love of the people of the broad northern earldom, and in consequence had been deposed from his government in the later years of king Edward's life. It would seem probable that some feeling against Tostig's

THE PORTENT OF 1066.

brother largely influenced the Northumbrian people. The biographer of Wulfstan especially attributes the quiet and sudden revulsion of feeling in Harold's favour, the result of his presence among them, to the reverence which was universally felt for the king's companion and adviser, the holy Wulfstan.

Harold came to London from the north, to keep at Westminster his first and, alas! only Easter feast as king of England. Just after that great church festival there appeared in the skies what men looked upon as a terrible portent, a singularly brilliant comet. The chroniclers relate how for thirty nights (others say only for seven), from sunset to dawn, this bright star blazed like a sun in the darkened heavens, with a vast train of light streaming behind it. In the England of Harold, men's minds were already strangely excited by events just past, and by the calamities said to have been foreseen in the near future. The end of the ancient race of Cerdic in the person of the sainted Edward; the election of a great hero of another race; the threatened invasion of the dreaded Scandinavian hero from the north, and of the mighty duke of the Normans from the south; these things led men to look on the sudden appearance of the great star as a dread portent of evil.

The troublous times predicted by the dead king were indeed at hand. Very soon after the Easter feast and Gemot held at Westminster, Tostig, the late earl of Northumberland, and a hostile fleet had appeared in the Channel, and was ravaging the southern shores. With little trouble Tostig was driven away, and sailed for the north. There, too, he was met and soon compelled to fly by the northern earls Edwin and Morkar.

But this raid was only the precursor of a far more formidable invasion. Tostig had already persuaded Harold Hardrada, the king of Norway, to invade England. Harold Hardrada's early and romantic career has been already briefly sketched. His fame as a warrior and a Viking chief, and later as a wise and prudent king, extended far beyond his own Norway. His invasion of England, which Harold had to repel in that sad and short reign of nine months, was no mere Viking raid of plunder; it was intended to be a formal subjugation of England, of which the renowned Viking chief entertained no doubt he would soon be master. His mighty fleet numbered as many as three, or even, according to many accounts, five hundred vessels; indeed, some of the recitals of Hardrada's expedition tell us that his ships numbered a thousand vessels of war. His wife and his son Olaf accompanied him, with other members of his family. In fact, so certain was the northern hero of success, that his expedition bore the character of a domestic emigration, as it has been well termed, and very careful arrangements had been made for the government of Norway by an under-king, one of his sons, while he reigned in England as Canute had done before him. Vast treasures, which he had gathered in the course of his long wandering life of war, formed part of the precious cargo of this great Viking fleet. One of these treasures, which from its enormous value became historical, was a solid ingot of pure gold, so large that twelve strong men could scarce carry it. This mighty golden ingot appears again as part of the

boundless wealth of William the Conqueror, acquired after the Conquest.

Rapid was the progress of the northern invaders, swollen by reinforcements of ships and fighting men from all parts of the north-west of Europe. The fleet of Hardrada entered the Tyne, where one army landed and marched south, meeting with but little resistance, while the fleet sailed to the Humber. Harold Hardrada penetrated with his host to York, which at once submitted to him, and then, after receiving the submission of the northern capital, the Viking pitched his camp at Stamford Bridge, some eight miles north-east of the city, never dreaming of the stern resistance he was so soon to meet with, so strangely had he miscalculated the resources and undervalued the military skill and daring of the Saxon king.

Harold was then suffering from severe sickness, but he never gave himself an instant's repose from the moment he heard of the approach of the Viking fleet. Far from being unprepared, his ceaseless energy had been from the very day of his coronation at Westminster preparing to resist one or other of those dangerous foes whom he knew he would soon have to meet in deadly combat. With extraordinary rapidity he marched from London to York. As he moved northward great bodies of armed men joined him. The whole strength of southern and central England were with him when he reached the northern capital, and before Hardrada had any idea that an army was at hand, he was confronted with the host of Harold.

His rapid march, that extraordinary and rapid mustering of the armed forces of the south and midlands, the skilful disposition of his men before the decisive battle, will ever stamp Harold of England as a great strategist and general. The Norwegian saga which tells the story of the awful battle between the two Harolds, describes the dread surprise of the Vikings at the appearance of the Saxon army. At first, the cloud of dust which heralded their approach was mistaken for a friendly force, possibly a division of the Northumbrian men-at-arms belonging to the cowed and defeated Northumbrian earls. But soon the vast numbers and threatening appearance of the oncoming Saxons, told the Vikings that that great array of shields and armour, glistening like the ice of their own northern country, belonged to foemen ready to fight to the death for their native land.*

We have, unfortunately, no authentic record of the battle that followed. It seems, however, that Hardrada was certainly more or less taken by surprise. The Northmen had never dreamed of that splendid march of Harold and his army. The fight of Stamford Bridge was fought on September 25th of that eventful, fatal year, and ended with the utter rout of the invading host of Hardrada. On that stricken field fell the famous Viking, with nearly all of his most trusted chieftains; and among the dead was Tostig, somewhile earl of Northumbria, to whose intrigues the invasion by Hardrada of Norway was mainly due. The famous raven banner of Norway, called the "land-waster," and the vast treasures of the Vikings, fell into the hands of the English king, and the poor remnant of the mighty northern host, with the body of

* Compare Freeman: "Norman Conquest," ch. xiv., 1, 2, 3.

their king, were suffered to retreat to their ships, when they at once sadly sailed for Norway, which they had left only a few weeks before with such high and confident hope of an easy conquest.

But the terrible victory was dearly bought. The flower of the English troops had been brought together by Harold of England to meet the northern invaders, and it was but a thin remnant of that splendid army which, after the decisive battle, re-entered the neighbouring York in triumph. Far, indeed, was the English host from coming scatheless—writes the historian—from that awful struggle. "Many of the faithful house-carls, the flower of Harold of England's army, lay dead on the stricken field of Stamford Bridge. Many a noble thane had given his life for his country; for, in truth, the vanquished invaders had sold their lives dearly. But the victory was a victory as decisive as any to be found in the whole history of English warfare."

There was a great banquet held at York to celebrate it, and the story tells us how, while the king in all his pomp was seated at it, a messenger hot with haste arrived to tell him how William, duke of the Normans, had just landed with a vast array on the shores of Sussex, and was ravaging the land far and near.

The leading events of the previous life of this William, duke of the Normans, were briefly set forth in Chapter XXII., from his accession in 1035 to the throne of his father, duke Robert the Magnificent, until the year of the accession of Harold in 1066. No mere man in the whole Christian era has so powerfully influenced the world's destinies, has left his life-work behind him so truly an abiding possession for all time, as duke William, generally known as the Conqueror; and the policy of the Norman duke and his chief adviser may be said to have had more permanent influence upon the Church of England, than even upon the civil affairs of our country. The work of Alfred was of exceeding importance; Henry II. raised England to a position of undreamed-of power; Edward I. was perhaps the greatest and most far-seeing of the illustrious princes who have sat upon this island throne; the work of Henry VIII. has had a measureless influence upon the fortunes of the English people and of our church. Apart from any of these great ones, however, it is possible still to think of England growing into its present unique position in the world. But William the Conqueror's personality positively cannot be so withdrawn; without him, the rise of the Anglo-Norman empire is an unthinkable thought. Other great men rank, and will ever hold their proud position, among the makers of England. But duke William the Conqueror alone can be styled *the* maker of England. On the continent of Europe, again, have many other men arisen, who in their day and time have exercised an enormous influence in the world; but the life-work of none of these, not even that of the great Charlemagne, has had anything like the enduring influence of the life-work of the Norman Conqueror. The England so largely his work and creation still endures, the most influential of the world-powers. Only one influence can be compared to it: that of Hildebrand, William's contemporary and ally, who as Gregory VII. was the maker of that vast spiritual domination

THE MESSENGER BRINGING TO HAROLD THE NEWS OF THE LANDING OF WILLIAM.

we call the Papacy, which endures, too, though shorn of much of its old power, to this day.

William the Conqueror's character was a complex one ; good strangely alternates with evil. One feature of it has been always dwelt upon by the king's more serious biographers: his fixed purpose, his unbending will. In his marvellous life-story we see, that whatever the will of William decreed, he found means to bring it about. "Utterly unscrupulous, though far from unprincipled, taking no pleasure in wrong or oppression for its own sake, always keeping back his hands from needless bloodshed, he yet never shrank from force or fraud, from wrong or bloodshed or oppression, when they seemed to him the straightest paths to carry out his purpose. His crimes admit of no denial, but with one single exception they never were mere wanton crimes. . . . His personal virtues were throughout life many and great. We hear much of his piety, and we see reason to believe that his piety was something more than the mere conventional piety of lavish gifts to monasteries. Punctual in every exercise of devotion, paying respect and honour of every kind to religion and its ministers, William showed in two ways most unusual among the princes of that age, that his zeal for holy things was neither hypocrisy nor fanaticism nor superstition ; . . . he appeared as a real ecclesiastical reformer, and he allowed the precepts of his religion to have a distinct influence on his private life. He was one of the few princes of that age whose hands were wholly clean from the guilt of simony ; in a profligate age he was a model of conjugal fidelity. He was a good and faithful friend, and an affectionate brother." *

One of the bravest soldiers of the time, he excelled in all martial exercises. In the decisive battle of Hastings his personal prowess was long the subject of the lilts of trouveur and troubadour. A great strategist and a consummate leader of men, his war-filled life is illustrated by a succession of remarkable and notable victories. As a statesman he was unequalled in Europe. Nor was he less notorious for his skill in administration than for his generalship in the field. In his own great Norman principality he found a state torn with internal dissensions and rent with anarchy : under his firm, strong rule Normandy and its broad dependencies became a loyal and peaceful land, a model to all the kingdoms and states of the Continent. "Had he never stretched out his hand to grasp the diadem which was another's, his fame would not have filled the world as it now does, but he would have gone down to his grave as one of the best as well as one of the greatest rulers of his time." †

And in conquered England, in spite of the untold misery which the great Conquest brought on unnumbered homes and hearths; in spite of the awful crime which made a desert and a waste of a vast part of Northumbria ; when once the Conquest was over and done, England was the most united and the most powerful and respected realm in western Christendom ; while within its own borders life and property were safer than they had ever been under the strongest of the Anglo-Saxon kings. The national Chronicler, one who loved not the Norman rule, but who is

* Professor Freeman. † *Ibid.*

scrupulously just and fair, after dilating upon the disastrous, rueful years of the stern conquest, after bitterly condemning the hard avarice of William and his chiefs, loving as they did to amass gold and silver, not caring how sinfully it was gotten, so that it came into their hands, thus speaks of the Conqueror: "King William was a very wise and a great man, more honoured and powerful than any of his predecessors. He was mild to those good men who loved nought of them. . . . Alas! that any man should so exalt himself and carry himself in his pride over all! May Almighty God show mercy to his soul and grant him the forgiveness of his sins." *

We left king Harold, it will be remembered, in the last days of the September of that fatal autumn of the year 1066, sitting amidst his thanes at the York banquet, held to celebrate the crushing defeat

HAROLD RIDING TO BOSHAM CHURCH TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT BEFORE STARTING FOR NORMANDY.
(*From the Bayeux Tapestry.*)

God, but severe beyond measure to those who withstood his will. . . . The good order which he established in the land is not to be forgotten; it was such that any man who was himself aught might travel over the kingdom with a bosom full of gold unmolested, and no man durst kill another, however great the injury he might have received from him; but he was of great sternness, and he took from his subjects many marks of gold and many hundred pounds of silver, and this either with or without right, and with little need . . . The rich complained and the poor murmured, but he was so strong that he recked which the English king had inflicted on king Harold Hardrada, the last of the long line of Viking warriors who had harassed England. As he feasted there came, all dusty and worn with hard and rapid travel, a messenger who brought him the dread though not unlooked-for news that William the duke of the Normans had landed with a vast army in the south of the island, and with all solemnity and earnestness had asserted his claim to the crown of England. The claim, after all—though William contrived to make it good—was based on somewhat unreal foundations. As far back

* Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Peterborough), A.D. 1087.

as the year 1051, on the occasion of a visit of duke William to Edward the Confessor, some kind of a promise was made by the childless English king to his Norman kinsman that he would adopt him as his successor. It would seem, too that then, during that visit, William had done homage to Edward, probably owing to this promise. Whatever may have been the promise, there is no doubt but that at a later period of his reign the promise was cancelled; for king Edward changed his mind completely concerning the succession, as he subsequently sent to Hungary for his nephew Edward, with the view of adopting the exile as his heir. Edward the exile, soon after his arrival in England, we know, died, and his son, known afterwards as Edgar Atheling, was little more than a child when the Confessor died. But William of Normandy never forgot the promise and the homage, and seems ever to have cherished the idea that he was the Confessor's acknowledged heir.

During the latter years of king Edward's life, earl Harold, the son of Godwin, the king's brother-in-law, gradually rose in power and in public estimation. He became king Edward's trusted friend and minister, famous alike as a great English thane, as a successful general, as a wise and competent statesman. Long before the king's fatal illness, earl Harold was the most powerful and the wealthiest, as well as the most popular Englishman. There is no doubt that duke William feared him as his most formidable rival for the English crown. In the latter years of the Confessor's reign, when all men's eyes were fixed on Harold as the probable successor to the childless Edward, Harold visited Normandy. During that visit there is no doubt that Harold did something, entered into some compact with William, which enabled William to charge him with perjury and breach of the duty of a vassal. "It is inconceivable," writes the learned panegyrist of Harold, "and unlike the formal scrupulousness of William's character, to fancy that on the death of king Edward the Confessor he made his formal appeal to Christendom without any ground at all;"* equally inconceivable that such a generally received story "should have grown up so near the alleged time without some kernel of truth in it." This generally received story was that Harold, on his way to the

HAROLD SETTING SAIL FOR NORMANDY.
(*From the Bayeux Tapestry.*)

* Professor Freeman.

court of Rouen, probably on some friendly mission from Edward to William, was thrown by a storm on the coast of Ponthieu. Guy, the count of the province, seized and imprisoned the English earl, who was liberated through the friendly mediation of duke William, who brought him to Rouen, but rather as a ransomed captive than as an English thane charged with an embassage. Before releasing him the Norman duke compelled him to take an oath of allegiance, promising him in return for his oath of homage the hand of his young daughter and other privileges in the future. The popular story goes on to say that Harold's oath was pledged under circumstances of extraordinary solemnity. Before it was taken—so runs the story—duke William sent out messengers, unknown to Harold, to all the famous abbeys and churches in Normandy, and holy and awful was the spoil with which these messengers returned. The spoil in question consisted of mouldering relics of the saints which formed the sacred treasure of the great religious houses of Normandy. These were gathered together and placed in a great chest; upon this chest Harold laid his hand when he swore his oath. When the English earl removed his hand, the cloth which veiled the chest was withdrawn, and "there from abbey and from church, it was seen, had been collected all the relics of human nothingness in which superstition adored the mementoes of saints divine; there lay, pell-mell and huddled, skeleton and mummy, the dry, dark skin, the white gleaming bones of the dead, mockingly cased in gold and decked with rubies, their grim fingers protruded through the hideous chaos, and pointed towards the living man thus ensnared; there the skulls grinned under the holy mitre." * At that sight, say the Norman chronicles, the earl Harold shuddered and trembled, for in that chest, as he swore his oath, on which he had laid his hand, lay all the relics which religion deemed the holiest in the land.

Such is the story, and there is little doubt but that some such oath was taken; and when the time came and king Edward slept with his fathers, though the great Witan of England elected Harold king in succession to the childless Edward, duke William claimed the splendid heritage of Canute, basing his claim upon the promise of Edward made to him years before, and upon the awful oath of Harold taken subsequently in Normandy.

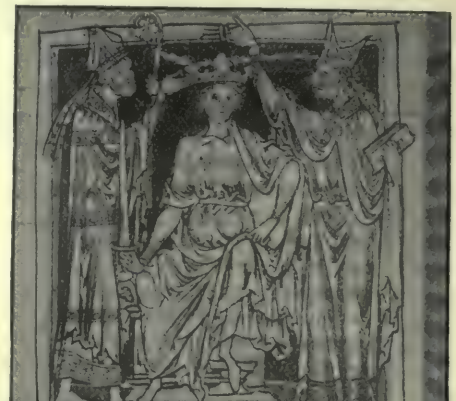
HAROLD TAKING THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO WILLIAM.
(*From the Bayeux Tapestry.*)

* Lytton Bulwer: "Harold."

By William's side stood the wisest and most astute statesman in Europe—the saintly scholar Lanfranc. The claim of Norman William to the English crown took a religious shape. William, under Lanfranc's direction, appealed to the princes and leading men in every Christian land; but, above all, he appealed to the head of Christendom—the bishop of Rome. And be it remembered, that when duke William made his strange appeal the bishops of Rome, as we have related, had risen from their long period of degradation and impotence, and were regarded with extraordinary veneration and respect. The reigning Pope of Rome was Alexander II., but the real influence at Rome was wielded by the wise Hildebrand, afterwards known as Gregory VII. This mighty ecclesiastical statesman saw at once what a powerful engine might this appeal to Rome prove in after days, when Rome should claim to be the arbiter of nations.

The appeal of William and Lanfranc was strangely successful. Not a few among the Continental powers were convinced of the justice of the Norman claim to England; and in the army which William led against Harold were many men of foreign nations. But, above all, duke William brought with him as an outward sign of the favour and approbation of the acknowledged head of Christendom, a consecrated banner from Rome. The war became a holy war. William was the champion of right and justice, and Harold a rebel against Holy Church. These were terrible odds in favour of the invader, and largely contributed to the successful issue of the Norman invasion.

That Harold was a consummate general all writers are now agreed. The victory of Stamford Bridge over the formidable host of the Viking Harold Hardrada, and the disposition of the Anglo-Saxon army at Hastings, bear ample testimony to his powers as a strategist and a general. But his best men-at-arms lay dead on the bloody field near York, where he vanquished with no small difficulty and with



CORONATION OF WILLIAM I. BY ALDRED, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

(From the Original MS. of Matthew Paris' Chronicle in Manchester Cathedral.)

tremendous loss the Northmen's invading host. The Anglo-Saxon forces at Hastings were in consequence sadly inferior to the mighty army of the Normans. This is clear from the sequel to the story of the battle; for we learn from the many accounts of it that the picked men of Harold's army, in spite of their splendid gallantry, and their leader's military skill, *were slain to a man* on that bloody field, and that south-eastern

England was left absolutely defenceless; while on the other hand the Norman army, whose numbers evidently far exceeded the forces of Harold, after the losses of the battle, which must have been very severe, was able at once, with the aid of some reinforcements from Normandy, to proceed with the conquest of England.

The conquest took, roughly, some three years and a half after the battle of Hastings before it was completed. The battle was fought in the autumn of the year 1066, and the last fearful act of the Norman Conqueror, the harrying of the northern shires, an act which left its mark upon these hapless lands for long years, was carried out in the last days of 1069. The accounts of that last awful ravaging are well preserved in the passionless pages of the great "Domesday Survey," where seventeen years later—as we turn over the pages of the "Yorkshire Survey"—we come again and again to the grim entry, "Waste," "waste"—the only description possible of many a once flourishing farm or village, after the destroyer had done his work. The history of these three years and a half of almost constant war is noteworthy, because it always marked the slow but sure progress of the Conqueror. Many a gallant stand was made against the invader, many a determined resistance to his arms. But it was all useless. The Normans and their foreign allies were led with consummate skill, as well as inspired with splendid bravery. The English were brave too, but had no leader worth the name, and they were never united; one part of England did nothing to help the other. The Anglo-Saxon race was ruined by lack of concert. One division of the realm after the other fell into the invader's hands. The merciless harrying of the north, which held out the longest, closed the story of the Conquest, and early in the year 1070 William, duke of the Normans, was king over the whole land. He at once began to carry out the settlement of the England he had won by his arms, and set himself now in good earnest to do what he and his chief adviser and minister, Lanfranc, felt was their duty towards the noble realm, won at the cost of so much crime and sorrow.

At first the forfeited demesnes and jurisdictions of the family of Harold, by far the wealthiest of the noble houses of England, were sufficient for the demands of his faithful soldiers and allies; but as the Conquest proceeded, gradually a very large portion of the estates of the native thanes and landowners suffered forfeiture, and Normans were substituted for the original landowners. England was, in comparison with most countries on the continent of Europe, enormously rich. Cities and wealthy men made bountiful offerings to the new king. Churches and monasteries, willingly and unwillingly, were equally liberal. The widespread commerce of England had brought, in the comparatively peaceful times of the Confessor and his immediate predecessors, untold wealth to the island. Words, we are told, would fail to describe the wealth which flowed into the coffers of the Conqueror, who became the richest as well as the greatest of earthly kings.

Liberally did William pour out upon the churches of those foreign lands which had helped him in the great conquest, the treasures of conquered England. The smallest monastery in those favoured

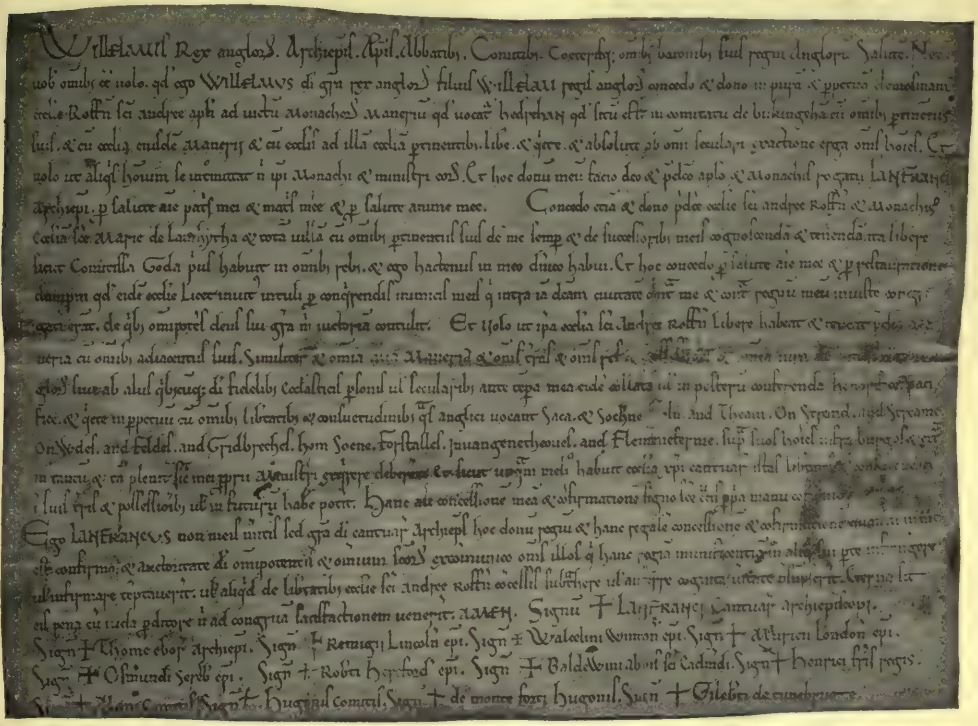
districts became the recipient of his bounty. We read of unnumbered gifts to foreign churches, of golden crosses studded with gems, of chalices of gold, of gorgeous embroidery, for which the religious houses of England were famous. The women of England were especially renowned for their extraordinary skill in this beautiful art. These precious things were scattered broadcast through the churches of France, Burgundy, and even of distant Aquitaine and Auvergne. Very wealthy was the Church of England in the days when the Confessor died. Men on the Continent gazed with wonder on these rich spoils of the Norman conqueror, these cunning works of the sculptor and of the goldsmith and the woman embroiderer—a striking testimony not only to the wealth, but to the early development of the ornamental arts in England under the Anglo-Saxon kings, largely, if not wholly, cultivated under the protecting shadow of the Anglo-Saxon church.

It was the government and constitution of this church, that William and his minister Lanfranc devoted themselves with peculiar earnestness to reorganise and remodel. Strong and powerful as was the Anglo-Saxon church in the Confessor's days, it had sadly fallen away from the discipline and reforms instituted by Dunstan and his school. The Anglo-Saxon church was also an intensely national church in spirit, and intimately bound up with the Anglo-Saxon state, and hence peculiarly hostile to the Norman policy of William and Lanfranc. Papal authority was weaker in England than elsewhere. In England was no strong line of demarcation drawn between spiritual and temporal things and jurisdictions; the national assemblies and Anglo-Saxon Gemots dealt freely with ecclesiastical, as with temporal matters. Bishop and earl, abbot and thane, sat together in the local gemots, and, what was singularly hateful to Norman churchmen, trained in the sterner and more ascetic school which had lately arisen under the shadow of the revived and reinvigorated Papacy, a strange laxity of discipline prevailed in England on the great question of the marriage of the clergy. Bishops even, priests, members of capitular bodies, were in the Anglo-Saxon church of the Confessor's days often married. All this the Norman felt must be changed. The general result of the reforms of William and Lanfranc was to make the Church of England more like the other churches of the west, in doctrine as in practice; and enormously, as we shall see, to increase the power of the Roman bishop.

Perhaps William's wisest act, and the one which had the greatest influence on his reign and administration, was his selection of the monk Lanfranc as his chief minister and counsellor. No one in that age of change has left his mark upon the Church of England like this great statesman-scholar, whom the Conqueror's unerring eye chose as his adviser, and whom he subsequently placed to rule over the English church.

The century and a half of anarchy, of shameless traffic in benefices, from the highest grade to the lowest, of general carelessness, and even of profligacy, in the Christian church of western Europe, has been already touched upon. The first half of the eleventh century witnessed, it will

be remembered, a general awakening, closely connected with the foundation of many new monasteries and the reformation of the old religious communities. In Normandy the same period—the middle of the eleventh century—was especially Italy. Maurilius, archbishop of Rouen, had an interesting record. Originally a native of Italy, he had successively been the teacher of Halberstadt, a famous Saxon (German) cathedral; abbot of St. Mary at Florence; then a monk of the highest



CHARTER OF WILLIAM II. GRANTING TO THE CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW AT ROCHESTER THE MANOR OF HEDREHAN (BUCKS) AND THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY, LAMBETH.

Witnessed by Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury; Thomas, Archbishop of York; Remigius, Bishop of Lincoln; Walcelin, Bishop of Winchester; Maurice, Bishop of London; Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury; Robert, Bishop of Hereford; Baldwin, Abbot of St. Edmunds; Henry, brother of the king (afterwards Henry I.), etc. A.D. 1088. (*British Museum.*)

fruitful in the foundation of monasteries and a revival of life and vigour in the church. Avranches, Bec, and other centres had become the resort of learned and devout men, and were attracting their crowds of pupils—some of them from distant countries, especially from repute for learning and sanctity at the Norman monastery of Fécamp. He was one of the foremost instruments in the regeneration of the Norman church, and under him the great cathedral of Rouen was completed.

By far the most famous and able, how-

ever, of the men of the new Norman church school was a scholar of the Italian city of Pavia, whom England in later days knew and honoured under the name of Lanfranc the archbishop. Lanfranc's name will ever rank among the foremost of the illustrious men connected with the Church of England. He comes before us in three distinct characters.

Firstly, he was *the minister* of that portion of the reign of duke William of Normandy which was principally occupied with making preparations for the invasion of England. He was the duke's chief adviser at that time. It was Lanfranc, strange to say, who before all others encouraged his master to make the daring attempt, and who carefully formulated the Norman claim to the English crown. It was Lanfranc whose rare skill in diplomacy and statecraft converted what really was a reckless, daring invasion of a peaceful country—an invasion in no respects more justifiable than that of the Scandinavian Harold Hardrada, which ended so disastrously near the walls of York—into a *religious war*, carried on under the direct sanction of the highest authority in Christendom, under the sacred shadow of the gonfanon of the saintly Pope of Rome.

Secondly, Lanfranc comes before us as the foremost champion of that strange doctrine of *transubstantiation*, which all through the Middle Ages exercised so mighty an influence over the fortunes of the church ; of that doctrine which is still exercising its strange and marvellous fascination over a great section of the Catholic church, the concluding chapter of its eventful story still belonging to the history of the future.

And, thirdly, Lanfranc comes before us as the great reorganiser and remodeller of the Norman Church of England. We have commented on the singular dearth of eminent men of the first rank in the English Church during the reign of Canute and his sons, and of Edward the Confessor. In Lanfranc we have one of those true great ones, who, like Theodore and Wilfrid, king Alfred and Dunstan, through their own individuality infused a nobler spirit into the church of which they were members, and gave it new life and power and long enduring influence.

His story is of singular interest. He was born in the first year of the eleventh century, his father being an eminent Lombard lawyer, of the northern Italian city of Pavia, and his years of early manhood were spent in following with distinction the same calling. Rarely gifted, with tireless perseverance, eloquence, and a strangely winning personality, a singularly prosperous, though perhaps an uneventful career seemed to lie before the young scholar lawyer. In the year 1039, however, when about thirty-five years old, he left Pavia and took up his abode in Norman Avranches. Various reasons have been alleged for this migration from the country of his birth ; possibly his prospects were marred owing to some change in the political circumstances of his native city, and he determined to seek his fortune in that Norman realm, then becoming famous in Europe. After his migration into Normandy, very rapidly grew the reputation of the brilliant and eloquent scholar. He was acknowledged to be one of the profoundest Greek scholars north of the Alps, and his school at Avranches by the sea was soon thronged

with pupils. But the mere fame of a teacher and scholar soon palled upon Lanfranc. He longed after nobler aims, and for a more spiritual and higher life than the position of a mere teacher, however sought after, enabled him to lead. So of a sudden we find him forsaking Avranches and the famous school which he had founded there, and determining to join the ranks of one of those many monastic communities at that time rising into repute in Normandy. He chose for his novitiate a house comparatively undistinguished in the great world, but which, among earnest and devout men, was known for the simple austerity of its inmates.

Some thirty miles from Rouen, a little to the east of the ruins of the old donjon of Brionne, so rich in memories of the Normandy of the dukes and their turbulent vassals, rises a long wood-covered hill. The traveller from Rouen to Caen passes it often without observation, but the scholar who would visit the scene of the most richly storied shrine in the north of France will do well to rest awhile at the little Brionne town. After wandering for about an hour through the wood of Brionne he will come suddenly upon a quiet secluded valley, in the midst of which runs a clear winding brook or bec. A lofty graceful tower at once will catch his eye; then he will notice the ruins of a long wall, which has evidently once enclosed a vast group of buildings; the remains of these buildings, now sadly disfigured, and curiously and sadly adapted into modern covered sheds and stables, to the eye resembling a vast farm, occupy the centre of the little valley of the Bec or Brook. This is Bec-Hellouin, once the home of Lanfranc and Anselm, two of our greatest English archbishops, who take rank among the greatest of the sons of our proud Church of England. These are the sad remains of Bec-Hellouin, a monastery which for some seven hundred years was reckoned as one of the richest and most illustrious of the religious houses of Europe. Modern France has ruthlessly destroyed the mighty church round which the monastery was built; a church one of the noblest in France. The great religious house has become a vast depôt for cavalry horses; but its undying memories no people, no government, however careless of its great traditions, will ever be able to wipe out. Herlwin (Hellouin), the founder of the once famous house of prayer and study, was a Norman noble, world-weary, who, in the days of duke William the Conqueror, built the first monastery by the banks of the little flowing Bec. In its early days it was but a small, unknown society of religious men, very poor, and very austere and simple in its life. Thither came the famous Pavian scholar Lanfranc, seeking something higher than the applause of his many scholars in his Avranches school.

"Manual labour was the principal employment of the holy house of Bec. Hard and fast Herlwin its abbot worked, aiding with his own hands the building of his rapidly growing house, except when chanting in the choir, or partaking of the one coarse meal which he grudged himself. You would always find Abbot Herlwin digging and delving, or his hand grasping the spade, or with hod on shoulder, as Lanfranc found him, all begrimed with mortar, engaged at vaulting an oven." Lanfranc—so runs the story—humbly made his obeisance

to the abbot. Herlwin asked him what he wanted. Lanfranc replied that he sought the cowl. "Herlwin, trowel in hand, desired a monk to bring the volume containing the rigid rules of the society, and the stranger was duly admitted to the community." *

lable of *docĕre*, thus. Lanfranc obeyed at once. Very soon, however, it was noised abroad that Lanfranc of Pavia, the famous teacher of Avranches, had become a monk at Bec. Then flocked to that hitherto unknown and humble house of God, numbers of students from all parts eager to learn from

RECEPTION OF LANFRANC BY HERLWIN.

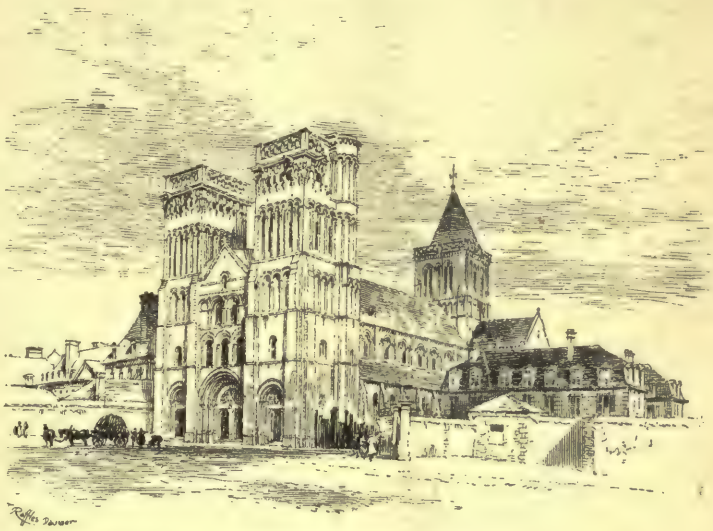
Strange stories are told about the great scholar's life at first at Bec. It was a poor unlearned community, and they guessed not that a mighty man of letters had taken refuge from the world and the flesh within their holy walls. One day, when reading in his turn to his brother monks in the refectory, the prior corrected his reading, and bade the late teacher of the famous Avranches school shorten the second syl-

* Palgrave: "Normandy and England."

the greatest scholar in France. Lanfranc was eventually induced to become prior of the house, under Herlwin, the abbot and founder. Bec became soon the resort of clerks and men of noble birth, of even sons of princes. The poor abbey was quickly enriched with gifts, thanks to the presence of the renowned brother who had in all humility joined their community.

His fame reached the ears of duke William, who, struck with his great learning,

and perhaps still more with his evident capacity, made him his trusted friend and counsellor. The friendship between the duke and the monk was, however, soon interrupted. William had married Matilda, the daughter of count Baldwin of Flanders. There is no doubt that this was a love marriage, upon which William had set his heart; but there was a bar which could not be got over. What that bar was is uncertain; most probably some relationship existed between William and Matilda, distant certainly, but still sufficient to afford canonical objection to the marriage. Malger, the archbishop of Rouen, who was subsequently deposed, it is believed, though not quite certain, excommunicated William in consequence; even Lanfranc the scholar gravely censured the duke, and for a season there was enmity between the friends. Lanfranc, however, consented to plead the duke's cause at Rome, and promised to win Pope Nicholas II.'s forgiveness of William and Matilda's sin against church ordinances. The embassy was successful, and the chief pontiff's blessing on the uncanonical marriage was eventually obtained, upon the condition of the duke and duchess each founding a monastery of expiation: they were, however, under the ban of the church for several years. The two stately abbeys of Caen, which William and Matilda built, are still in existence, and serve as an enduring memorial of Lanfranc's influence at Rome. More than 800 years have passed, but these famous churches of expiation have outlived all the changes of these many years, and in their severe and perfect beauty tell us of the skill and taste of the Norman architects of William's day.



ABBAYE AUX DAMES, CAEN.
[*This was Matilda's Church of Expiation.*]

Lanfranc, who became the first abbot of St. Stephen of Caen, William's abbey, rose higher than ever in the counsels of the great duke, and in the momentous period which immediately preceded the conquest of England, was the minister and adviser who guided and directed the whole Norman policy. As we have said, it was Lanfranc's skill and wise statecraft which gave to the invasion of England the character

of a holy war, waged under the direct approbation and blessing of the chief pontiff of western Christendom at Rome. We shall meet with the scholar and statesman-monk next, as the first Norman archbishop of Canterbury.

It is, however, the position which Lanfranc, before he came to England as archbishop, took up with reference to a church doctrine involving questions of the highest importance, which especially interests us in our story of the Church of England. He became the leading advocate and teacher of the new view which churchmen were taking of the holy Eucharist, and which had, when it was generally accepted as a Catholic doctrine, so momentous an influence upon the church and her power over the souls of men. And his subsequent elevation to the primacy of the English church, gave him the amplest opportunities of stamping his views respecting the sacrament of the Eucharist permanently upon the teaching of the great Anglo-Norman church over which he was called to preside.

We have already treated of the genesis of this doctrine, which still is so strangely influencing the opinions and claims of so many of the ministers of the Catholic church. As early as 826, Paschasius Radbertus of the monastery of Corbey, had boldly formulated the doctrine, afterwards so widely received under the well-known name of "Transubstantiation;" and Radbertus' new views had been earnestly opposed by such eminent men as Rabanus Maurus, archbishop of Mainz, Johannes Scotus Erigena, Ratramn, and others. The doctrine, notwithstanding, gradually gained an ascendency in the course of the tenth century in the churches of the continent of Europe. In England, however, as we have seen from the authoritative works of Elfric, it was not received by the Anglo-Saxon church. What was, however, a *floating* doctrine, largely accepted, though not as yet authoritatively acknowledged, became crystallised in the middle of the eleventh century, very largely through the influence of the learned and powerful Lanfranc, the favourite minister of duke William of Normandy.

The year 1000 witnessed the birth of Berengar. This celebrated man we hear of as a teacher at Tours in 1035, and in the year 1045 he had already acquired some considerable notoriety as an opponent of the new Eucharistic doctrine which was rapidly gaining ground in the teaching of the church. His celebrated letter to Lanfranc, then master of the school of Bec, seems to have brought the question to a crisis, and from this time Lanfranc stands out as the prominent defender of the new view. "I have been told"—so runs the letter of Berengar of Tours—"Brother Lanfranc, that you have actually pronounced as heretical the opinions of John Scotus (Erigena), in which he differs from Paschasius Radbert. Now, if this be the case, you have pronounced a judgment rash and unworthy of the powers of mind with which God has endowed you. You have not as yet grounded yourself in Holy Scripture, or conferred much with those who have been more diligent in Scriptural studies than yourself. If you reckon John (Erigena) a heretic, whose opinions on the Eucharist I (Berengar) maintain, you must be supposed to count as heretics

Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, not to mention others."

This public challenge threw the gauntlet down. Lanfranc took it up, and a series of church synods and councils discussed the question, now made a vital point of orthodoxy. At Rome in the year 1050, and again at Vercelli, at Brionne in Normandy, near Bec, in 1051, at Tours in 1054, again at Rome in 1059, and later at Poitiers in 1075, at Rome in 1078-9, were the views of Berengar condemned with more or less severity, and the doctrine of transubstantiation, of which Lanfranc was the ardent advocate, affirmed. Lanfranc's celebrated treatise on "The Body and Blood of the Lord" was written and put out between 1063 and 1070. In it he reproves Berengar for spreading his errors, and boldly asserts his own reception of the doctrine as formulated by Paschasius Radbertus. It is maintained that it was this treatise which for the first time established transubstantiation and all its consequences in the church.

It must, however, not be assumed that Berengar's views were by any means universally rejected. He seems on more than one occasion to have temporised, but it is clear that he held fast to his opposition to Lanfranc to the last, dying in the year 1088. His memory was long reverenced in the district of Tours, and down to late times there was a yearly solemnity at his tomb. Moreover, on this great question the opinions of Hildebrand (Gregory VII.) are doubtful. Holding, as he did, the greatest position of power and influence in the church all through this period, it is of the deepest interest to us, in all the later burning discussions upon the doctrine, to remember that Hildebrand, in spite of the almost universal feeling of the church of his day in the matter, never could be brought to brand Berengar as a heretic. Indeed, the reproach has been thrown at the head of this foremost son of the Church of Rome—the chief maker of her awful and far-reaching power—that he himself doubted the real bodily presence of the body and blood of the Redeemer in the sacrament, "*infidelis est.*"

Lanfranc of Bec, of St. Stephen's, of Caen, of Canterbury, triumphed; and the doctrine of transubstantiation, first forged in the workshops of the abbey of Corbey by an unknown brother, known in history as Paschasius Radbert—the doctrine which teaches men "that the priest has the power of *making God*" *—passed into the doctrinal treasure-house of the Catholic church of the West; and with it a new and mighty source of sacerdotal authority, sacerdotal wealth, sacerdotal dominion. It was not long before it reached our shores. The ink of the first draft of Lanfranc's famous treatise on "The Body and Blood of the Lord" was scarcely dry, when Lanfranc's master crossed the narrow silver streak which parted his Normandy from Harold's England, with that great host sheltered by the sacred gonfanon of the Pope of Rome. Where William went, Lanfranc was sure to follow. In the year 1070, less than four years after the fight at Hastings, Stigand, the Anglo-Saxon archbishop, was formally deposed, as might have been expected, by the action of a council, with the sanction of the Norman king of England and the Pope

* Dean Milman: "Latin Christianity."

of Rome, and Lanfranc was placed in the vacant chair of the primacy of England. With the great Norman archbishop the doctrine of transubstantiation, of course, became part of the formal teaching of the Church of England. But when, in the sixteenth century, another teaching on the Eucharistic Presence took its place, this was no new thing to England. The teaching of the reformers in

SEAL OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

this matter was, as we have shown, simply a *return* to the old paths in which the fathers of the Anglo-Saxon church had walked, and which Elfric in the last years of the tenth century had so clearly and unmistakably marked out.

It was in the Lent of the year 1070—when the Conquest was virtually completed—that William in a solemn assembly at Winchester commenced the work of remodelling the government and discipline of the English church. For the first time in the history of England, three Papal legates sat with the English king to guide and assist this work.

He began with the bishoprics. The primate's throne of York was just vacant. Aldred, the Saxon archbishop, was dead. In his room William appointed Thomas, a canon of his brother Odo's see of Bayeux, a man of high and stainless character. From this time onward, all through William's reign, as English bishops died, or were from various reasons deposed, strangers—generally Normans—took their place. At the time of the king's death, in 1087, only one of the English bishops remained, the saintly Wulfstan, of Worcester.

In the same year, 1070—some say at a council held at Windsor—archbishop Stigand was formally deposed, the three Roman legates acquiescing. Charges of accusation against the old Anglo-Saxon arch-prelate were easily framed. Stigand's ecclesiastical position, as we have seen, even when Edward and Harold

reigned, was ever a doubtful matter. No *acknowledged* Pope had ever granted him the cherished insignia of the pall. But his real crime in William's eyes was that he was too deeply attached to Anglo-Saxon usages ever to submit to the new state of things. His throne, too, was sorely wanted for Lanfranc. It was a sorrowful ending for the old man, who for so many years had filled the chief place in his beloved church. Condemned to perpetual captivity in the strong castle of Winchester he was, some think, done to death by hard and cruel usage.* Stigand was reproached with parsimony, with refusing to betray the secret of vast treasures he still possessed. When literally starved to death, men say that on his shrunken person was found the key of a cellar where his hoard was deposited —a secret which he had in life refused to betray. His place was filled by Lanfranc, who was now arbiter of the fortunes of the Church of England.

Lanfranc was a great scholar and theologian, a wise and astute statesman, a devoted friend and admirer of William of Normandy. But he evidently preferred to play the part of minister, of the trusted adviser of his sovereign, with some leisure to pursue those studies he loved so well, and to which he had consecrated the best years of his life, to occupying the uneasy throne of an archbishop, with all its accompanying cares and ceaseless troubles. Already had he refused to be archbishop of Rouen, and at first he steadily declined the vacant chair at Canterbury. But William was determined that his friend and chief adviser should take in hand

Photo: Neurdin.

THE NAVE, ST. STEPHEN'S, CAEN.

* Some writers, however, describe his imprisonment as wanting these harsher features embodied in our text.

the work of remodelling the powerful church of conquered England. At this time Lanfranc was abbot of the new abbey of St. Stephen at Caen, and it was indeed with great reluctance that he left that quiet home, where he was loved and honoured, for Canterbury, where his life must in future be spent in the midst of a sullen people, and surrounded by stranger ecclesiastics, who would view all his acts with suspicion, if not with dislike. It needed all the strong pressure of his master, king William, all the influence of queen Matilda, the expressed wishes, if not the actual command, of Pope Alexander II., to induce the scholar-statesman to accept the hard and difficult charge vacated by Stigand.

It was a gloomy beginning, too, for Lanfranc in Canterbury ; for the cathedral had been lately destroyed by fire, and his consecration was performed in a rough and temporary church. Only nine of his suffragans were present. Before him, indeed, lay a difficult and thankless task. But the choice of William, and his persistency in forcing Lanfranc to accept this nomination, was justified. For nineteen years the Italian monk-scholar filled what was perhaps the most difficult and arduous post in the church of the west. During his English career he remodelled the church of the conquered island, and yet contrived to win an almost universal love and admiration among the conquered people. He became in England a true Englishman, and that without forfeiting the friendship and confidence of William. As his trusted adviser, in a hundred ways he was enabled to soften, if not to change, the harsh measures too often adopted in the early days of the Conquest. No truer friend to the vanquished Anglo-Saxon race lived in those stormy days, than the wise and generous scholar-statesman Lanfranc. His entire devotion to the country he had reluctantly adopted as his own, in spite of the momentous changes in the church of which he was the chief pastor, and for which changes he was mainly responsible, was amply recognised even in his own lifetime. The memory of Lanfranc's career as archbishop is one of the brightest of the many noble and true traditions of the Church of England.

One of his first cares was the rebuilding of his own metropolitan church. Only seven years were spent in the work. Lanfranc took as his model his own loved church of St. Stephen of Caen. The church, when finished, was in all respects a minster of the Norman type. The building thus raised was carefully enriched with every ornament known in that age, and the skill of the goldsmith and the painter were lavishly bestowed on this, the first great Norman church built after the Conquest. But little, however, of Lanfranc's work remains in the present superb and stately cathedral of Canterbury, which was almost entirely reconstructed on a far grander and more imposing scale in the days of his great successor, Anselm. In his own city he largely increased the numbers of the monks at Christ Church, and gradually introduced a severer discipline in the community. He built hospitals for the sick and the poor, rebuilt the archiepiscopal palace, and carefully set in order the temporal affairs of the see.

But the work of Lanfranc extended over a far wider area. He was something more

than a wise and prudent bishop. Under him the whole government and policy of the Church of England underwent a great and momentous change. The old English church, under the Anglo-Saxon kings, was most distinctly national. The reforms of Lanfranc weakened the insular independence of England, and made her church less national, but more like the continental churches of the west in Gaul and Italy, and enormously contributed towards the growth of Papal claims. Losing much of its insular and independent character, the Anglo-Norman Church was started on a new career. The moment was singularly propitious for bringing about this change. Independently of all special circumstances attendant upon the great Conquest, and the consequent change of government, the Church of England at the time of the coming of the Normans was no doubt wanting in vigour and energy. The revival of life and energy under Dunstan and his school had worn itself out. The time was come for a new and vigorous revival; but Lanfranc did more than merely raise the standard of the Church of England intellectually and morally: he changed its entire position as regards the state, and altered completely its ancient relations with the Roman see. The Church of England for more than four centuries and a half virtually ceased to be a national church, and, on her ecclesiastical side, became a province of a foreign empire.

The principal changes introduced by the Normans were as follows:—*

(1) The most important ecclesiastical measure of the reign of William the Conqueror, and the one that had the most far-reaching influence, was the separation of the church jurisdiction from the secular business of the courts of law. The bishop and the archdeacon no longer held ecclesiastical pleas in the hundred court, but held courts of their own. Causes connected with spiritual matters were henceforth tried by canonical, not by customary law; no spiritual question came before laymen as judges. The bishop no longer, as in the days of the Anglo-Saxon monarchs, sat with the aldermen in the assembly of the shire as joint president. He presided in his own court, where ecclesiastical causes were alone tried. When he sat in the popular assemblies it was as a baron rather than as a bishop. The archbishop henceforth held his synod distinct from the great Gemot, or assembly of the realm. The effect of this was to separate in a great degree the life of the church from the national life. It created new aspirations, new thoughts on the part of ecclesiastics; making them members rather of a great foreign empire, whose chief and ruler resided in Rome, than members of a national church, whose interests were closely bound up with those of their own country.

(2) The Church of England under Lanfranc, was brought into much closer dependence on the see of Rome. In Anglo-Saxon times the only acknowledgment of dependence on the part of the English church was the payment of a tribute of a penny on every hearth, a tax which was collected and sent to Rome from the beginning of the tenth century, under the general name of Peter's pence. The origin and purpose of this singular

* Compare Stubbs' "Const. Hist.," ch. ix., and Freeman's "Norman Conquest," ch. xix.

payment is somewhat doubtful. It seems really to have originated with Offa, king of Mercia, who instituted the payment

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.
(*From an Old Relief in Chichester Cathedral, late 11th or early 12th Century.*)

when, with the assistance of the Roman bishop, he founded the arch-see of Lichfield—which, however, soon ceased to exist—as a rival to the arch-see of Canterbury. Probably this payment was in some way, too, connected with the maintenance of the English school in Rome, and the frequent presence of English pilgrims to the hallowed sanctuaries of the Eternal City.

The only other acknowledgment on the part of the Anglo-Saxon church of the supremacy of Rome, was the reception of the sacred emblem of the pall by the English archbishops after their appointment, at the hands of the Roman bishop. The interference of legates from Rome, which, after the Norman conquest, perpetually exercised so great and baleful an influence on the government and policy of the English church, was virtually *unknown* in Anglo-Saxon days. There was no Roman legation before the days of Offa, in 787, and there are only scanty vestiges of such interference for the next three centuries. Few traces indeed of Roman influence can be noted in Anglo-Saxon history; and wherever interference on the part of Rome was attempted it was resisted. Dunstan, for instance, even refused to obey a papal sentence.

But directly after the coming of the Normans all this was changed. Legates from Rome, possessing a great though perhaps at first an undefined authority, now make their appearance in England. Three of these foreign officials were present at the council held after the completion of the Conquest, in A.D. 1070, when archbishop Stigand was deposed, and other grave ecclesiastical changes were made; and gave to the proceedings of this important assembly, the weight of the approval and sanction of the Roman see.

(3) A sterner and more ascetic way of living was gradually introduced into the Church of England by Lanfranc and his Norman suffragans. The long-disputed question of the marriage of the clergy was again prominently brought to the front by the Norman archbishop. The reforms of Dunstan and the men of his school had in England largely fallen into abeyance, and marriage among the clergy in the later days of the Anglo-Saxon rule was very customary. It will be remembered, in our

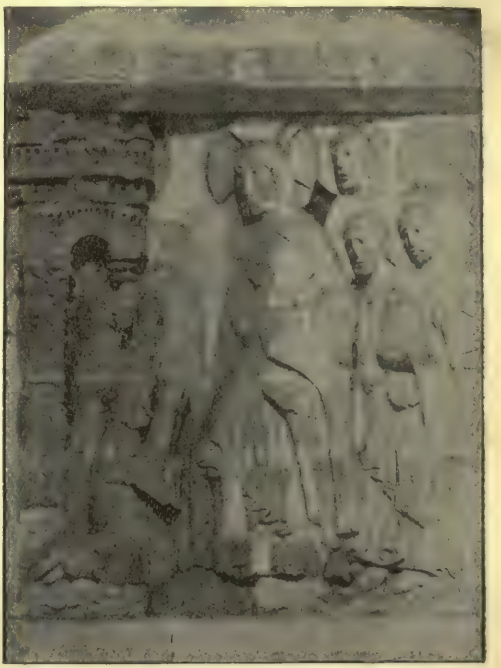
Photo : Charles H. Barden, Chichester.

CHICHESTER : THE CATHEDRAL, MARKET CROSS, AND TOWER

sketch of the reforms attempted and largely carried out in foreign churches in this the eleventh century, how rigidly this question of celibacy was pressed and enforced. Lanfranc was intensely convinced of the advantage and even of the solemn duty of this rigorous abstinence on the part of ecclesiastics of all degrees; but was too wise, perhaps too kindly natured, to press his views here with all severity. He passionately desired it as a rule of ecclesiastical life, but he set to work cautiously. He began with the canons of cathedral and other capitular churches. To the capitular clergy under the Norman rule marriage was absolutely forbidden, without reserve or exemption; even those already married were called on to separate from their wives; but a milder discipline was at first enforced on the parochial clergy, and some relaxation of the stern edicts of Pope Gregory VII. (Hildebrand) was allowed by the legislation of Lanfranc. But this relaxation of a rule intended to be enforced was only temporary, and the future was carefully provided for. Those priests who were not already married were strictly enjoined not to marry, and the bishops were strictly warned against ordaining married men.

(4) It has been already mentioned that among the changes in the English church after the coming of the Normans, the Anglo-Saxon prelates were speedily removed to make way for foreigners. Stigand of Canterbury was deposed, York and Lichfield were vacant by death, Dorchester had been filled up since the battle of Hastings by Remigius, the monk of Fécamp. The bishop of Durham was removed as guilty of treason. Hereford, Wells, Ramsbury, Exeter, and London were already in the hands of foreigners. After the year 1070 only two sees retained native bishops; henceforth the bishops and most of the abbots were Norman. The Conqueror's bishops were, however, generally good and able men, though un-English in character; and the various changes were brought about in the church without harshness or oppression. Lanfranc's wise and holy influence over his suffragans cannot be overestimated.

Nine years after the Conquest began a long series of changes in the sites of episcopal sees, which were gradually completed



CHRIST VISITING MARTHA AND MARY.
(From a late 11th or early 12th Century Relief in Chichester Cathedral.)

during the reigns of the first two Norman kings. In a council held at St. Paul's in London, it was directed that the site of

sees, hitherto often placed in villages or small towns, should be removed to cities. In most cases these changes have endured in the Church of England all through the eight hundred years which have elapsed since the days of the Norman William. The seat of the united sees of Sherborne and Ramsbury was moved to *Old* Salisbury. (The present *New* Salisbury was only adopted as the bishop's home in 1221.) Selsey, the old seat of the South Saxon bishopric, was now changed for Chichester. Chester was substituted for Lichfield, but Chester was soon deserted for Coventry, and Coventry and Lichfield were acknowledged as joint seats of the north-western Mercian see. Remigius, the monk of Fécamp, who as a reward for his energy at the time of the Conquest received the see of Dorchester, the old seat of the famous missionary Birinus, near Oxford, and whose vast diocese stretched far to the north, reaching from the Thames to the Humber, chose as his new home the hill of Lincoln, on the summit of which he built the first proud cathedral, dying only a few hours before the consecration of his new and lordly minster-church. Elmham, long the episcopal seat of the East Anglian prelates, gave place to Thetford, but before the close of the century Thetford was exchanged by the great building bishop Herbert of Losinga for the eastern rival of Exeter and Winchester, the populous and wealthy Norwich. Lastly, the little city of Wells ceased for a season to give a home and name to the Norman prelate of Somerset, who more naturally chose as his episcopal seat the time-honoured city of Bath, the famous Aquæ Solis of the days when Roman legionaries were stationed in Britain before the coming of the North-folk.*

All these changes which the coming of the Norman brought upon England, as years went on, were in a way forgotten. The new sees, the new ways of government, the separation of the intimate and peculiar connection which in Anglo-Saxon times had existed between the state and the church: all this eventually settled down, and men forgot that there had ever been a time when these things were not. The greatest change of all, that which formally acknowledged the right of the bishop of Rome to interfere and to act as judge in grave matters pertaining to the church, and which effectually placed the Church of England beneath the yoke of Rome, after some four centuries and a half, was again swept away by a series of unlooked-for events, and once more the Church of England became a purely national church. One feature which the "coming of the Normans" bestowed on the Church of England has remained, however, all through the eventful centuries; through the successive Norman, Plantagenet, and Tudor dynasties, through the desolation of the Wars of the Roses, and the yet greater misery of the wars of the great Rebellion.

That is, the number of mighty *Norman churches*. They are with us still, in all their changeless solemn beauty, bearing their voiceless testimony to the long and splendid story of the Church of England, so indissolubly bound up with the life and well-being of the nation. When we speak of the "coming of the Normans," and of the momentous changes which the one

* See Stubbs: "Const. Hist." ch. ix.

great battle and the conquest which followed brought upon the English people and their church, few realise how far-reaching in their effects many of these changes really were; but when we point to our great cathedrals, to our lordly abbeys, *all* of them due to the new spirit infused into the hearts of churchmen by that wonderful race of conquerors, the appeal at once goes home, and the greatness of the Norman and his work is recognised by the mass of our people, who have scant leisure to study and to grasp the teachings of the many-hued pages of the civil or religious history of our country.

Very soon after the settlement of England, which began directly the Conquest was fairly complete, in the year 1070, the great work of building began. Almost the first thing taken in hand by the Norman prelate after he had taken possession of his see, was to commence the building of a new and stately cathedral. Nor was it only the bishops: in not a few instances the Norman abbot of an important English monastery would show a like zeal in converting the old church of his house into a lordly abbey-church. Such churches had never been seen in England before; while even in Europe, north of the Alps, only in a few instances, in famous centres, in cities such as Rheims or Toulouse—centres round which clustered the story of many centuries—were houses of God to be seen of a magnitude and magnificence to be compared with those minster-churches which, at the bidding of the Norman adventurers, arose on the hill of Lincoln, on the cliff of Durham, in the fen lands of Ely, or in the Severn-watered meadows of Gloucester. These mighty prayer-houses belonged especially to that age; for in England, with comparatively few exceptions, all those vast piles dedicated to the service of God, which for well-nigh eight hundred years have been the pride and glory of the Church of England, arose in the time of William the Conqueror and his archbishop Lanfranc, or in the years immediately following. In not a few of these stupendous houses of prayer and teaching, the taste or want of taste of succeeding generations has changed, improved or spoiled, the grand work and simple decoration of the first master builders. But the plan and the design, and in some notable instances the bulk of the original work of the majority of our noblest minster churches, remain as in the great building days of Lanfranc and his school.

As men gaze on these vast piles, some of them beautiful and strong as in those far-back days when William the Conqueror and Matilda his queen took counsel with their wise friend Lanfranc, they naturally and wonderingly ask, Whence came *the gold* needful for all these stupendous and enduring works? It is acknowledged to have been an age of rare and exceptional genius, an age which produced architects and builders of singular device and exceptional power; but still the question presses, Whence came the vast resources requisite for so many and for such enormous and superb works? We may reply with very little hesitation, that the prelates and the abbots to whose loving care and far-seeing genius we owe these glorious abbey-churches, were assisted by a *deep feeling of remorse* which took possession of the Conqueror and his queen, and many another of his knightly comrades; remorse for the deeds of blood

and violence which, alas! accompanied the Norman conquest; remorse for the wide-spread misery which their greed of gain and lust of power had brought upon hapless England.

To this feeling, more deep-seated than has been usually supposed, was owing no doubt a considerable portion of the enormous sums of money given to the bishops and the abbots by the king and his Norman barons, in the years which immediately followed the days of the Conquest. These Norman cathedrals and abbeys were cathedrals and abbeys of *expiation*. Nor was the undreamed-of wealth and treasure given by these mighty and successful Norman men-at-arms, alone devoted to those grand cathedrals and lordly abbey-churches which are the chief outward ecclesiastical glories of our land. The gold thus given was far more than was needed even for these stupendous works, on which we still gaze with mingled wonder and admiration. Vast wealth was given by the Norman chiefs to the Benedictines and to the other monastic orders; and the result was that more religious foundations were established in England in the days of the kings of the Anglo-Norman House, than during the whole preceding or subsequent period of English history. For instance, during the nineteen years of the reign of the Conqueror's nephew Stephen, one hundred and fifteen monasteries were built, and one hundred and thirteen more religious houses were founded in the reign of his successor Henry II.

Perhaps the church of Edward the Confessor suggested this new strange work, supplying at once an example to be followed and a model to be copied in the famous West-Minster: abbey, monastery and palace, then gleaming in all its white beauty by the broad silvery Thames, hard by the great city, with its triple towers, its long nave with its massy columns, its gold and gem-encrusted shrines, its wealth of colour and shining gold on roof and pillar, radiant with all the beauty which cunning sculptor and skilful artist from foreign lands, in the service of a king like the Confessor, at once wealthy and devout, could devise.

NORMAN MOULDING, DURHAM CATHEDRAL.

Lanfranc, who found the cathedral in ruins, set the example at Canterbury, and in the too short space of seven years raised his metropolitan church "from its very foundations, and rendered it nearly perfect, after the new Norman manner," we are told. But his work was necessarily hurried, and evidently wanting in that stately beauty so loved of the Normans; and in his successor Anselm's days the "glorious choir of Prior Conrad" replaced the eastern limb of the building of William the Conqueror's minister-archbishop. Other cathedrals and abbeys rose in quick succession. Notable among these is the matchless pile erected on the bold and lofty cliff which overhangs the Wear at Durham—begun by William of Saint

Carilef in 1093, and well-nigh completed by Ralph Flambard, the minister-bishop of Rufus, in A.D. 1128. It stands before us now, much as the old Norman builders left it, simply peerless in its awful beauty: within and without perhaps the finest church in England, some think in the world.

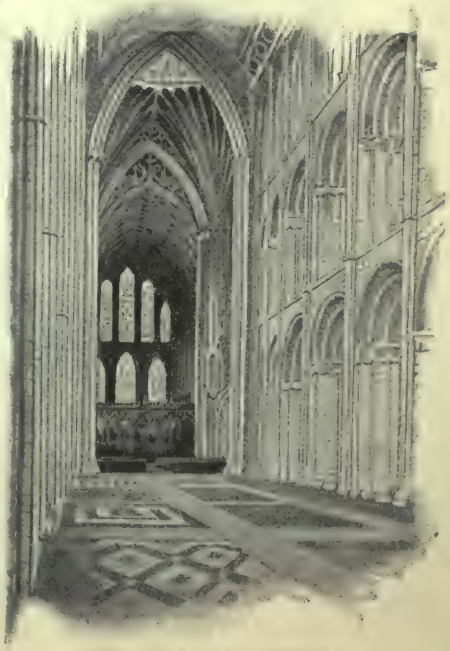
In East Anglia, in Norwich cathedral—largely the work of bishop Herbert de Losinga, which was commenced in the year 1096—we have the second longest nave in England: a triumph of skilful architecture, with its massive nave piers rising up seventy feet, presenting to the eye a marvellous vista of two tiers of

THE NAVE, NORWICH CATHEDRAL, COMMENCED A.D. 1096.

Photo: Frith & Co., Reigate.
DURHAM CATHEDRAL, FROM THE WEAR.

round-headed arches, resting on Norman shafts, with the well-known cushion and voluted capitals—the whole scarcely changed, though the colour and gold of the Norman builders has vanished in all the long centuries of wear and tear.

The grand conception of bishop Remigius, the monk of Fécamp, who chose with unerring eye the hill of Lincoln, looking over the wide world, for his lordly seat, is alas! almost wholly vanished, and only in the vast and splendid wall which forms the strong west front of the superb pile of St. Hugh, find we any traces of the great house of prayer which Remigius built, but never prayed in, for he died—strange fate—only a few hours before its solemn consecration. There, in that gorgeously decorated lofty wall, above which soar the graceful western towers of the mighty cathedral, set deep are three rude cavernous recesses, the only Norman fragment left us of the eleventh century work of Remigius. Beautiful as a dream is the cathedral of St. Hugh, yet some of us who love well the unequalled work left to us, would be better content if the noble conception of Remigius of Fécamp, the Conqueror's friend, still crowned the hill of Lincoln with its church of simple grandeur. On the Wear cliff over Durham, men still gaze and wonder at the perfect design of the Norman Carilef and Flambard, and rejoice that no later hand, however skilful, has interfered with the original inspired design.



THE NAVE, ELY CATHEDRAL.

In the Fen lands the hands of the great Norman builders were especially busy: not a little of their work remains with us. In the wondrous pile of St. Etheldreda at Ely, not inappropriately styled "the monarch of the Fen lands," the massive and stately transepts of abbot Simeon, brother of one of the Conqueror's first bishops—Walkelen, of Winchester—together with the Norman nave of a slightly later date, remind us who first designed and built that exquisite cathedral, which in its variety of style perhaps surpasses all the churches of England.

But if Ely in its very confusion of beauty has somewhat lost its original Norman character, there is another of the great churches of the Fen country which remains an almost perfect monument of Norman industry and marvellous taste and skill. Save in its gorgeous west front, and in a few less conspicuous additions of a later and more fantastic age, the great Mercian abbey of Peterborough, within and without, presents to the Englishman of the nineteenth century the most perfect example of a mighty Norman home of prayer, and has been well described as "completely expressing the aims and ideals

THE CHOIR, PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL.

of the Norman race at the apogee of its power." Nothing can be conceived more impressive than the long vista of huge round arches, resting upon the plain Norman pillars of the nave, rising tier upon tier from the floor to the lofty roof. The solemn repose of this Norman nave of Peterborough is almost unbroken by ornaments, and yet the triple row of arches gives an appearance of richness beyond compare. Somewhat painful, perhaps, is the monotony of the stony whiteness of this great interior at Peterborough. But it must be remembered, when this death-like hue in a measure dismays and appals, that the master Norman builder of the early years of the twelfth century who raised the glorious house in the first instance, veiled much of the white stone of massive arch and pillar with a wealth of colour and of gold, which, alas! has disappeared long ago.

In the south-west of the midlands, in that country known as the Severn lands, the Norman builder was especially busy, and very remarkable specimens of his handiwork yet remain in the noble abbeys of Gloucester and Tewkesbury. Singularly little interfered with by the vast lapse of time—eight hundred years—the imposing Norman naves of Gloucester and its twin sister at Tewkesbury, with their lofty arcades of gigantic columns, crowned with huge round arches of the well-known Romanesque type, bear their everlasting witness to the daring and splendid conceptions of the great Norman building abbots of the end of the eleventh century. Gloucester, and its sister abbey of Tewkesbury, on a slightly smaller scale, stand alone among great Norman churches in some particulars. Nowhere in Europe are such mighty columns to be seen. Though in exquisite grace and perfect proportions they fall short of Durham, or even of Peterborough and Norwich, yet in grandeur and majesty these vast churches stand absolutely unrivalled. We speak alone of the "naves," for in both these stately Norman churches the east ends—the choirs—have been altered to suit a later fashion.

In the choir of the larger and grander Gloucester, the "perpendicular" architect in the fourteenth century has left comparatively untouched the massive Romanesque, but has tossed, so to speak, a great white veil of delicate stone tracery over the low-browed arches and the round and massive pillars of the Norman builder; but only on one side of the masonry. So *within* the choir we gaze upon a Gothic interior of extraordinary richness, and beautiful as a dream; *outside*, and round the choir, we walk through an ambulatory where the sternest, gravest Norman composition of round arch and massive shaft, with the well-known Norman capitals and mouldings, tells the wondering student of architecture that, after all, in spite of the marvels of the later Gothic choir, with its walls of cunning lace-work, with its vast transparent tapestry of glass closing the eastern end, the great pale grey abbey of the Severn lands was really the work of the Conqueror's builders.

We have lingered long and lovingly over these great churches built by William and his archbishop Lanfranc and his school, because we could point to these matchless creations in stone—still with us, after so long a lapse of time, preserving their inimitable beauty, their matchless grace,

and, above all, their religiousness—as part of the work of the Norman reviser and remodeller of the Anglo-Saxon church. Well-nigh all else has disappeared. They found here a powerful Christian church, purely national, absolutely independent, was emphatically *not* the teaching of the Anglo-Saxon theologians. The Normans also enforced a rigorous rule of celibacy among the clergy. All this passed away again in the upheaval of the sixteenth century. Once more the church became

THE NAVE, GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL.

closely bound up with the civil life of the people; they remodelled it after the pattern of the other churches on the continent of Europe, till it became like them, ranking as one of a great spiritual federation which looked to Rome as its absolute chief. The great Eucharistic doctrine of the "corporal or material presence of the blessed Lord," formulated about the middle of the ninth century, Lanfranc introduced into England. It an English church exclusively, not a mere province of Rome. Celibacy was pressed no longer. The great Eucharistic doctrine of the corporal or material presence was expunged from her authoritative manuals of teaching, and in its place was substituted, almost word for word, the teaching of the authoritative manuals of the Anglo-Saxons of the tenth century. Thus the Norman work in the English church, after lasting more than four

centuries, was at last mostly undone, and largely in doctrine and partly in practice, our church returned to the doctrine and practice of the pre-Conquest church.

But the Norman abbeys and cathedrals remained, to bear their solemn witness to Lanfranc's foresight and to William's zeal, to their high aims and ceaseless purpose in the matter of spreading and increasing the church's influence among the people. Even in the majority of those great churches, where an architecture of a more ornate and later date seems to point to another race of builders, we may still trace the spirit of Lanfranc and the Norman school; as in the case of such abbeys as Westminster and of cathedrals like Lincoln, which belong apparently to another school of architecture altogether. The size, the plan, and original design of some great Norman builder will be found to have been rigidly followed, with perhaps a few modifications, or with, comparatively speaking, slight additions. The historian of ecclesiastical architecture in England can point to very few of the great churches of the land which are not the outcome of Norman skill and power, awakened by the fervid enthusiasm of Lanfranc and his disciples in the eleventh and first half of the twelfth centuries. The cathedral with its changeless beauty, the great minster-church, the stately abbey, those noblest and fairest productions of Christian art, not the least of the precious possessions handed down by our fathers to the immemorial Church of England, come to us from the Normans.

Whence did these Normans learn the wondrous art, acquire that strange skill, which designed and built Durham and Peterborough, Norwich and St. Albans, Gloucester and Tewkesbury, and many another stately minster and abbey-church, enduring as it was beautiful?

The history is simply as follows: In Rome—we are speaking now of the times which preceded the Christian era—*before* the days of the perpetual dictators and the great emperors, the "round arch" architecture seems, certainly in large and important buildings, to have been in common use. As time went on, the Roman people borrowed much from the Greek, and amongst other things the architecture of Greece; so that in what is generally and roughly termed the *classical Roman* style of building, the old "round-arched" construction is more or less disguised by features borrowed from Greek architecture.

Then came a period in Roman building when the Greek features were cast away, and when the round-arched construction stood out again without any attempt at disguise. A conspicuous example of this "renaissance" of the old "round-arched" building is to be found in the splendid palace of the emperor Diocletian at Spalatro, erected with all the skill and taste and boundless resources of the Roman empire, in the early years of the fourth century of the Christian era. From that time onward, with various developments and peculiarities of detail, the "round-arched" style, *the Romanesque*, as it has been generally termed, became the architecture of the western world.

When, on the gradual dismemberment of the Roman empire, the northern tribes overran a large portion of Europe, and gradually settled themselves in the countries

they had so successfully invaded, they found the "round-arched" building style almost universally the favourite architecture in the various countries they appropriated. They developed it with different features in their several adopted countries. New forms, fresh and independent developments of the common "round-arched" idea, sprang up. For instance, in the lands south of the Loire, forms of singular novelty were struck out; we trace them still in the great churches of Aquitaine and Provence. In the north of Gaul a people of rare power, equally distinguished for their love of daring adventure as for their ability in organisation and peaceful settlement in the countries they conquered, under the name of Normans, somewhat later established a powerful realm. These Normans, too, found the "round-arched" style the current architecture of their ever-spreading dominions. Between Italy and Normandy a close connection existed. The Norman had also gradually established himself as master over a large portion of southern Italy. There was a constant passing and repassing on the part of the soldier and scholar between the two countries, and apparently out of this connection between Italy and Normandy, grew the peculiar "Romanesque" called Norman.*

But it was not until after the conquest of England that this style attained its full perfection. The churches, even the most notable, built by this great people in their own Normandy were comparatively small, and usually simple in arrangement and ornament. But when the great Norman ecclesiastics obtained sees in conquered England, and when apparently almost limitless resources were placed in their hands, largely as expiatory offerings, then Norman Romanesque attained its full development, in those magnificent and lordly churches erected in England during the later years of the Conqueror, and in the course of the reigns of his immediate successors; so many of which, in part or in whole, have survived the wear and tear, the changes of art and fashion for eight centuries, and which still remain the delight and wonder of our own time.

Two important legislative measures which belong to the primacy of Lanfranc and the reign of William the Conqueror, must not be forgotten. The first of these pieces of work exclusively concerned the church. There does not appear to have been any fixed "use" or service in the English church. A considerable variety in the manner of performing divine service existed in the several dioceses. Nor was the "use" of the cathedral or mother church of the diocese always taken as the pattern by all the churches and monasteries even in its own diocese. Varieties in the mode of chanting, arrangements of certain portions of the service, introduction or omission of collects, constituted a distinct "use." We hear of the "uses" of York, Hereford, Exeter, and others. The coming of the Normans, and the subsequent appointment of many Norman prelates, abbots, and priors over the English sees and religious houses, no doubt greatly contributed to this divergence in "use," each being more or less wishful to introduce into his own diocese and religious houses the "use" to which he had been accustomed.

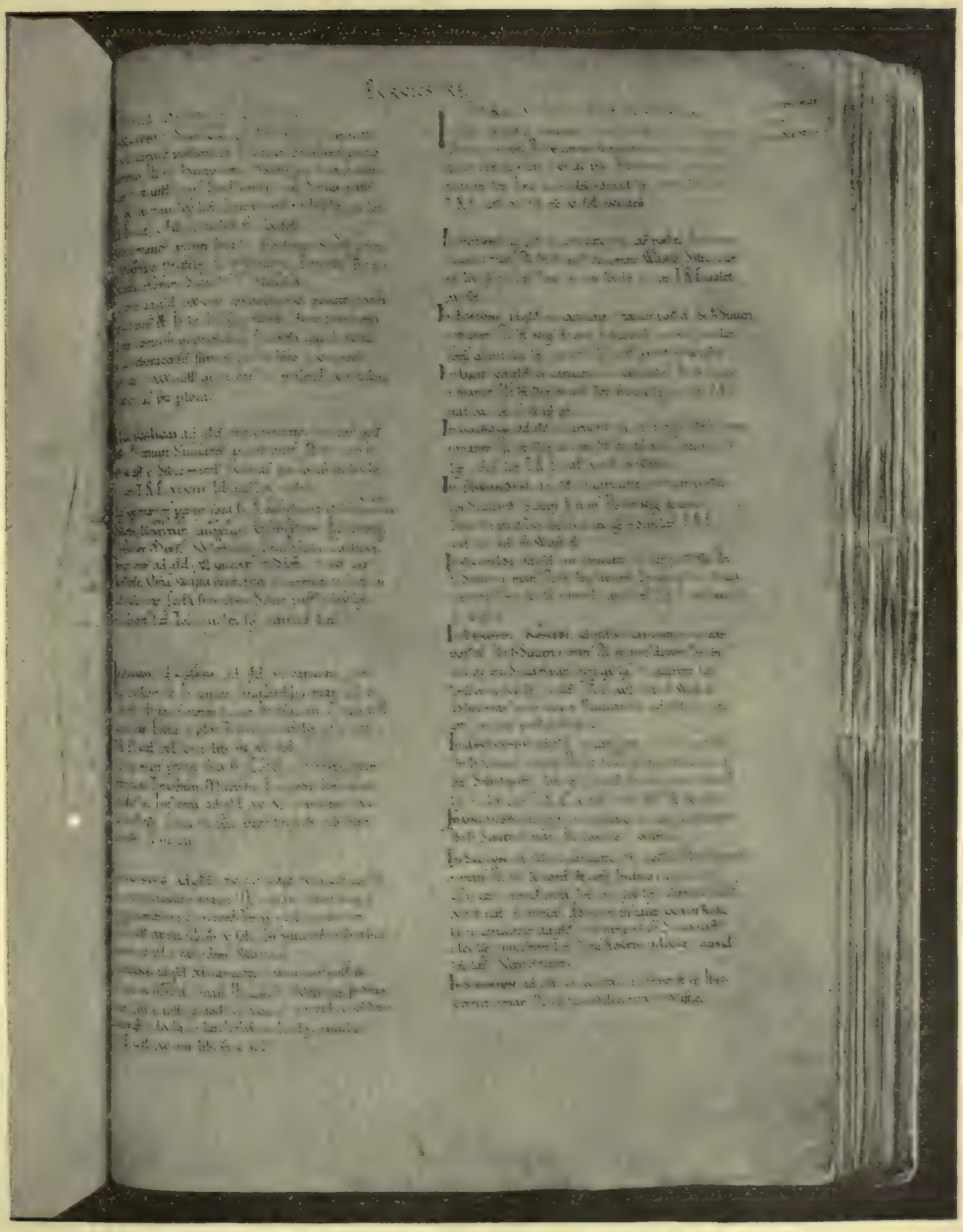
* For further details see Freeman: "Norman Conquest," chapters xix and xxvi.

A bitter quarrel which in the year 1083 took place in the abbey and monastery of Glastonbury, attracted public attention to the grave inconveniences occasioned by such divergences. In the case of Glastonbury, the abbot Thurstan endeavoured to force upon his monks, proud of their ancient house and its time-honoured "use," a peculiar style of chanting invented by William of Fécamp. The innovation was stoutly resisted by the Glastonbury monks, and a tumult and even bloodshed ensued, for the abbot called in to his assistance armed men. In this lamentable disturbance many of the inmates of the monastery were wounded, and some were even killed. This terrible scandal apparently suggested the investigation into ritual and practice set on foot by Osmund, bishop of Salisbury (Sarum).

A number of clergy and persons learned in ritual were gathered together, and the result of their deliberations was the famous "custom book" or "use of Sarum," which was drawn up under the direction of bishop Osmund, under the sanction of the archbishop and his suffragans. This "use of Sarum" was wholly or partially adopted in various parts of the kingdom, more particularly in the south of England. It was generally regarded as the model ritual of the Church of England all through the Middle Ages. In the reign of king Edward VI. and in that of queen Elizabeth it became the basis of our present Book of Common Prayer. The "use of Sarum" was put out by bishop Osmund in the year 1085. Osmund was one of the most distinguished of Lanfranc's suffragans. He was one of the most devoted servants of the Conqueror, who created him earl of Dorset, and subsequently this Osmund held office under him as chancellor. He became bishop of Sarum A.D. 1078.

The second of these great measures was embodied in "Domesday Book." This great record is simply unique in its own kind. It has been well said to rank as a national possession, side by side with the contemporary English Chronicle. No other nation possesses such materials to draw upon for its history. At the Witan held at the midwinter feast at Gloucester, in the year 1085, king William presided, wearing his crowned helm, and held "deep speech" with his barons and chieftains. The result of this "deep speech" was the commission of inquiry which resulted in the great survey of England, afterwards methodised and abstracted in the volumes of "Domesday," which were deposited in the royal treasury of Winchester. It still exists, as fresh and perfect as when the scribe wrote it, and it is the oldest survey of a kingdom now existing in the world. It bears the date A.D. 1086.

The "deep speech" of William with the Witan, which resulted in the compilation of Domesday Book, was held in the plain vast chapter-house of Gloucester cathedral; which, save that the apsidal east end was transformed and beautified in the fifteenth century, still remains to us scarcely changed from that far-back day, when the mighty Norman Conqueror sat in all his state, wearing his crown, with his barons and ministers of state sitting round him, in the Christmas feast of the year 1085. Remigius of Fécamp, bishop of Lincoln, the builder of the Norman cathedral we have spoken of, was one of the four principal commissioners



A PAGE OF DOMESDAY BOOK. (*Record Office.*)

who conducted the survey. The caligraphy of the precious volumes which we still possess betrays an Italian hand, and leads to the supposition that it was under the inspection and direction of the learned Lanfranc that the work was compiled.*

The following little extract, translated from the original Latin in which the book was written, will give a fair idea of the thoroughness and completeness of this most precious document. The entry is from the Domesday survey of the county of Dorset :—

"XLVI.—Lands of Mathew de Moretania.—Mathew de Moretania holds Melburn of the king, Johannes held it in king Edward's time, and it was taxed for five hydes; there is land for four ploughs, in the demesne are two ploughs, with one villane and nine cottagers; a mill pays thirty-two pence; there are five acres of meadows and six acres of coppice wood; it was, and is, worth a hundred shillings." (The "hyde" was variable, but consisted generally of a hundred acres.)

From the Domesday survey we gather that the number of tenants-in-chief at this period of the Norman rule amounted to nearly seven hundred. Very few Saxon names are found in the list. The ecclesiastical tenants are about two hundred and fifty of the entire number. *More than one-third of the whole land of the kingdom, at the close of the Conqueror's reign was in the hands of the church.*

The "passionless record" of the great Domesday survey bears also terrible witness to the cruel harrying of Yorkshire and the north, which resisted for a lengthened period the Norman rule. Some sixteen years had passed since the frightful punishment had been inflicted by the Conqueror on the unhappy northern country, and in page after page of the Yorkshire lordships we read the monotonous and saddening entries of "waste," "waste." To take a page as an example, after a long string of places, we read the following—"*Omnia wasta præter Engelbi*"*—pages 305-305*b*. The entry of "wasta" occurs also in many other places in the page which we have chosen as an instance!

Two years after the completion of the Domesday Book survey, came the end of William's brilliant, stormy life. His minister and archbishop Lanfranc scarcely survived his loved master two years. The closing scenes of William's life were strangely interesting, and some account of the death-scene of the Norman remodeller of the Church of England, must find a place in this story of ours.

In our brief sketch of the fortunes of William the Norman we have, of course, mainly confined ourselves to his work and influence on the church of the country he had conquered and literally made his own possession. After the Conquest was completed William was the richest and most powerful prince in Christendom. He was master of a large portion of France; absolute lord, even possessor of wealthy England in a way no king before him had ever been, and after a fashion no king since has ever dreamed of being. His wealth, largely, of course, derived from England, was simply boundless. One who

* Palgrave: "Normandy and England."

* See asterisk in the photographed page given on p. 145.

was privileged to look at the mighty king in the days of his highest prosperity and grandeur, when presiding over his national council at one of the royal feasts, wearing his royal crown, dwells upon his majestic and kingly presence. Nor does he, in the full tide of his success, in the midst of his anxious, prosperous life, seem to have been affected with any remorse for the untold misery he had wrought. This hideous aspect of the Conquest was only unveiled to him at the end.

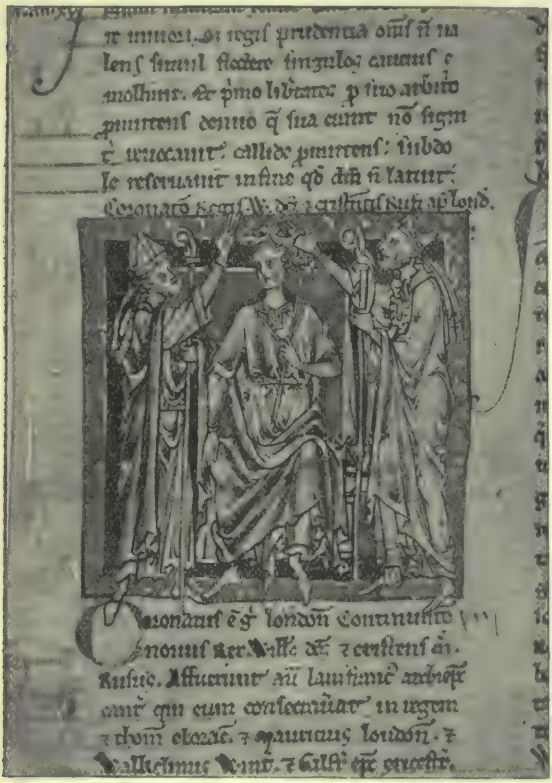
It was in the year 1083 that Matilda, his loved queen, was taken from him. After that he never smiled, and his own end was but four years later. The petty frontier war in the year 1087, in which William received his lingering death-wound, was an unworthy and melancholy end to such a career as his. Some gross and insulting words spoken by the king of France concerning his increasing corpulence, determined the Conqueror to execute a cruel vengeance on the little frontier city of Mantes and the smiling country which lay around it. Mantes had previously excited his wrath owing to some border forays. With a powerful array of armed men he swept over the doomed district. The trouveur and troubadour dwell with peculiar picturesqueness on the events of this brief invasion, so memorable in its consequences. They relate how the ripening corn and the fast-growing vintage were destroyed by the Norman soldiery, how the king ruthlessly burned the little offending city, and how in his wrath, as he galloped through the burning ruins of Mantes, he received the fatal internal bruise from the tall iron pommel of his saddle, upon which he was jerked as his horse stumbled. Fainting and sick, the Conqueror was borne from the ruins of Mantes to the not distant city of Rouen. Then came on a lingering inflammation.*

The old palace of the dukes of Normandy was in the heart of the great city near the river. Comparatively few travellers now penetrate within the vast half-ruined building of the ancient ducal palace of Rouen, which is now used as a customs warehouse for stores of wine and oil; but the long rows of massive Romanesque columns which support the stonework of the vast halls are still eloquent with memories of the mighty dukes. The noise of the busy city, the heated atmosphere of Rouen—it was summer-time—were intolerable to the fevered, dying sufferer. He was removed to the priory of St. Gervais, on a hill just outside the city, and there the great Conqueror went through the long agony which preceded death. Some forty days of suffering were lived through, and never during that long-drawn-out period of sore sickness did William lose his consciousness or even his power of speech.

Chroniclers and trouveurs who, on the whole, were friends and admirers of the great king, unite in depicting the awful agony of mind of William during these last sad days. Many bishops and abbots kept him company during that long watch. Curiously enough, his oldest friend and adviser, Lanfranc, was absent: weighty cares of church and state no doubt kept him in England. Two ecclesiastics famed for their skill in surgery are specially

* See Palgrave: "Normandy and England," book ii., chap. xiv.

mentioned among those who were with the king at the priory of St. Gervais by Rouen — Gilbert, bishop of Lisieux, the favourite court physician, and Gunthard, abbot of Jumièges.



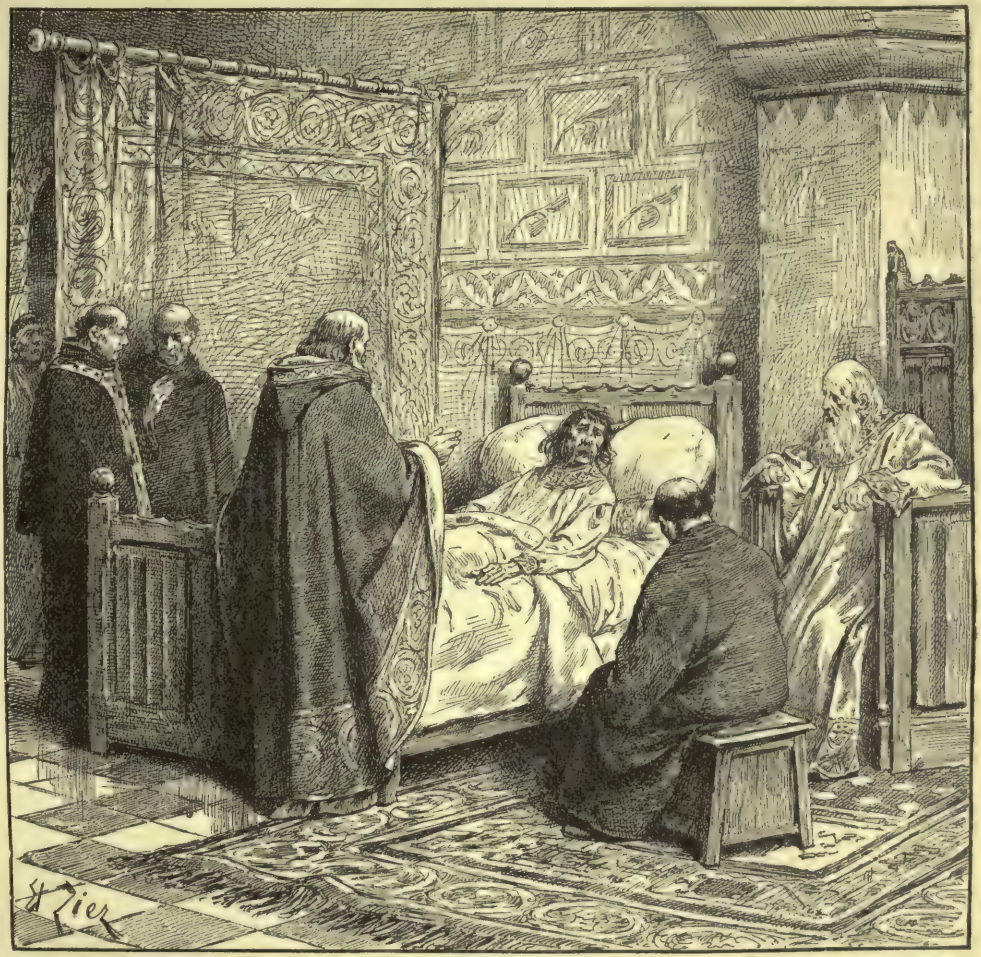
CORONATION OF WILLIAM II.
(*From the Chronicle of Matthew Paris in Manchester Cathedral.*)

The momentous state question which principally harassed the dying man was the succession to the crown of England. For a long time he shrank from formally bequeathing the splendid inheritance which he had won—he felt *now*—at the cost of so much unspeakable woe to others. He remembered the awful slaughter of Hastings, the terrible harrying of the northern counties, the "waste" entries in his too-true Domesday record, the many thousands of the noble English nation who had perished by sword or famine or in bitter exile—alas! at his bidding: we are almost quoting the chroniclers' words. To England, to that grand inheritance so won, the Conqueror *dared* not appoint a successor; he could only leave the disposal of that crown to the Almighty Ruler of the world. As for Robert, his eldest born, Robert as his heir had already received the homage of the Norman barons. To Robert certainly would fall the great heritage of Normandy and Maine, virtually the north and north-west of France. But to Robert, whose wild and wayward life, faithless and disloyal, gave promise of a career of disaster and shame, he would surely never entrust England. In William Rufus, his second son, who had been ever loyal to him, he discerned the signs of that future great ability which distinguished the Red King in future years, but failed to see in his favourite the beginnings of that cruelty and greedy rapacity which surely must have disfigured even the early years of that evil though brilliant man.

At last, however, he was induced to write to Lanfranc at Canterbury, a letter commending Rufus. Lanfranc the archbishop, whom conquerors and conquered alike loved and trusted, might crown Rufus king of England if he pleased. The young prince hurried with this letter to Canterbury, and in due course, when the Conqueror at last slept in Lanfranc's abbey

of St. Stephen at Caen, the loved archbishop, assisted by Thomas of York, placed on his head the blood-stained diadem of England.

A few more restless days followed at



THE CONQUEROR'S LAST DAYS.

St. Gervais. At the last, many noble hostages and prisoners of high degree were freed from captivity. In those long, weary summer days, while he lay slowly dying on that hill looking down on the old ducal city, the mighty and successful king took careful thought as to the disposition of some large part at least of his vast treasure hoard. Much was left to be distributed among the poor. Yet larger donations were to be given to the many churches of his broad realms. All the churches of England were to receive a rich gift of money, besides sacred vessels and ornaments. One special bequest tells of the earnestness of

his repentance, and how vividly the memory of special sins came up before him in his long-protracted agony. All the churches of the hapless little city of Mantes, where his horse stumbled over the burning remains and gave him his death-blow, were to be rebuilt at his cost.

The final summons came to the Conqueror on the 9th of September of that fatal year. The night, as usual, had been restless. At last he fell into a fitful slumber. The king was awakened by the sound of the great cathedral bell pealing over the city. To a question as to what it rung for, he was told it was only the usual summons to the service of prime in the metropolitan church of Our Lady. William, it is said, looked up, and stretching out his hands, was heard to murmur, "To my Lady Mary, holy Mother of God, I commend myself, that by her sainted prayers she may reconcile me to her dear son, our Lord Jesus Christ"; and so he died. In the contemporary English Chronicle the writer, after impartially summing up the good and evil of that wonderful life, closes his record with a pious prayer which all true Englishmen will surely re-echo: "May Almighty God show mercy to his soul and grant him forgiveness of his sins!"

Lanfranc was now an old man, and his race, too, was nearly run. Only a short space of time remained for him, and he, too, would be summoned to join his master, and Matilda, and the mighty men of valour and counsel who had shared in the Conquest. But his record was the whitest possessed by any of those great ones who, amidst all the terrible scenes of the invasion, had yet laid the foundations of the future greatness of England; and well had he made amends for his share in the counsels of preparation which went before Hastings. Perhaps alone among the Normans of the first generation of the Conquest, his name would be mentioned in his adopted country accompanied with a blessing. His enormous influence for good is shown by the behaviour of the new king, who, as long as Lanfranc lived, showed no signs of the unrighteous rule of later days, but who eventually was execrated throughout the land over which he was called to rule.

But the death of Lanfranc took place in less than two years after the death of his famous master. The immediate cause of it was singular. He was spending a few days in retirement at Canterbury, where, archbishop though he was, he exercised the office of abbot—a duty possibly more congenial to him than the manifold cares which must have perplexed and harassed the head of the English church and the trusted minister of the king. While enjoying this brief interval of repose and study, the old man sickened with fever. The monk-infirmier at once prescribed a remedy. But the archbishop refused all medicine: he was going to receive the holy Eucharist, and must not break his fast. The physician warned him of the danger of delay, but Lanfranc was determined. Then it was too late. The fever rapidly sapped the old man's failing strength, and the end followed all too soon. To whatever school of theology the student of our church's eventful story may belong, he will not honour the memory of Lanfranc the less, that he closed a noble life in doing what he felt was honour to his Lord.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ANSELM. GROWTH OF THE PAPAL POWER.

Pagan Character of William Rufus—His systematic Simony—Anselm—A Royal Sick-Bed Repentance makes him Archbishop—Long Battle with the King—Appeals to Rome—Years of Exile—Death of Rufus and Accession of the Beauclerc—Character of the new King—His Marriage—Royal Claims to Investiture—Anselm again Appeals to Rome—Settlement in Favour of the Church—Anselm's Influence and Work—His Last Days and Death.

SO long as Lanfranc lived, Rufus had in all public affairs, especially in church matters, been substantially guided by his counsel. When the influence of the wise and good Lanfranc was withdrawn, another spirit guided the dealings of the new king with the Church of England. William Rufus was beyond doubt a most able sovereign, brilliant alike in the field and in the cabinet; but in him the old ungovernable wildness of the northern sea-pirates seemed to have revived again, and with it the Viking hatred and scorn of the Christian religion. By his side stood a clever and unscrupulous minister, nominally a Christian priest, but ready and willing to carry out his fierce master's will.

The famous Ralph Flambard, the chief minister of William Rufus, was a native of Bayeux, where the old Danish families and traditions lingered longer than in any other Norman centre. When comparatively young he entered the royal service, and by degrees rose from the superintendence of the king's kitchen to the chief place in the king's cabinet. Rufus on his accession found him a prominent member of this inner circle of royal clerks, and on Lanfranc's death honoured him with his friendship and confidence. He appears through the reign, now as chancellor, now as treasurer, but always as the favourite and powerful minister. "Priests," Rufus is reported to have said, "hold half my kingdom." Flambard's appointed work was to get as much as possible out of these churchmen, whom the king hated with all the old Viking hate.

The principal device adopted by the unprincipled minister of this great pagan—for this was what Rufus really was—consisted in a disgraceful traffic carried on for all bishoprics and abbeys. It was the old curse of simony, which in the tenth century had so wounded all the western church life and work, revived in an especially shameless form. Under William Rufus and his friend and adviser Flambard, the old sin was enhanced by a prolonged confiscation of any rich piece of preferment on the occasion of a vacancy. Canterbury was thus confiscated for nearly four years after Lanfranc's death. The stern, grave entry in the contemporary English Chronicle—under the date of the year 1100

—tells the story of Rufus and Flambard's evil dealings with the church tersely but effectively. "In his (Rufus') days all justice sank, and all unrighteousness arose in the sight of God and of the world. He trampled on the church of God, and as to the bishoprics and abbacies, the incumbents of which died in his reign, he either sold them outright, or kept them in his own hands, and let them out to renters, for he desired to be the heir of everyone, churchman or layman ; so that on the day on which he was killed he had in his own hands the archbishopric of Canterbury, the bishoprics of Winchester and Salisbury, and eleven abbacies, all let out to farm."

To stem the torrent of all this high-handed iniquity on the part of this "pagan" sovereign, in the providence of God one of those rare great ones was raised up in the Church of England, who in the dark days of the Red king kept alight the torch of goodness and earnestness. When the Conqueror lay on his forlorn death-bed at St. Gervais by Rouen, we read how he longed for the presence and the comfort of the holy abbot of Bec, Anselm ; but his dying wish was never gratified, for Anselm was just then prostrated by sore sickness.

The story of this remarkable man is an interesting one. In the little north Italian city of Aosta at the foot of the great Alps, in the year 1033, Anselm was born. His family were small, insignificant nobles, vassals of the count of Maurienne. Nothing remarkable is told of his childhood and boyhood. His father was a thriftless and violent man, who showed, apparently, little sympathy with the studious, religious boy ; indeed, he opposed his early desire to share in the conventual life. This first love, however, passed away, and the young Anselm in early manhood threw himself with ardour into all the pleasures and dissipations which too often make shipwreck of the young and untried. Still young, apparently driven away by home troubles after his mother's death, he drifted in search of fortune into Normandy, and there had the good fortune to fall under the influence of Lanfranc, then a public and much sought-after teacher at Avranches. The great scholar obtained a lasting influence over the plastic nature of Anselm, awakening in that young soul the great powers which were lying sleeping there.

Lanfranc betook himself to the simple austere community of Bec : the pupil followed the master. For a time Anselm, though he loved Lanfranc with a great and passionate love and admiration, was jealous of his master, and felt that where Lanfranc was there was no room for him. But nobler thoughts gained the mastery, and he put himself body and soul into the hands of the great teacher. Under Lanfranc's direction he became a monk of Bec. This was in the year 1060.. From pupil he became teacher—a teacher of extraordinary power and sympathy. "Whole days," his biographer and devoted friend, Eadmer, afterwards tells us, "he would spend in giving advice and help to the younger pupils of the holy house of Bec, and then would spend the night in correcting books for the Bec monastery, then growing into vast repute as a seminary ; he was as ready, too, and unwearied in doing the work of a nurse in the infirmary or at the death-bed, as he was to teach and

to discuss in the cloister. Behaving so that all men loved him as their dear father, he bore the ways and weaknesses of each, supplying to each what he saw they wanted." It was to this deep, true sympathy with others that Anselm owed the boundless influence he afterwards obtained over the souls of men. No man in his own

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK.

From the MS. Gospels, written A.D. 1138 *by the Monk Maelbrigte at Armagh.* (*British Museum.*)

day and time possessed the key to men's hearts like him. When Lanfranc left Bec in the year 1063 for another and a higher post, Anselm, then thirty years of age, was chosen prior of his house.

In the biography of Eadmer the following episode in Anselm's work at Bec occurs, and throws light upon his ways of working. When at a comparatively early age, and after only three years' profession as monk, he was made prior, much jealousy was excited. A strong party against him was formed in the monastery. Among the angry monks was a young man of talent and ability named Osbern, whose hatred of Anselm was singularly bitter. Anselm determined to win him, and treated his enemy with every possible kindness. Time went on; Osbern was completely softened, and grew to love Anselm with a love greater than the old hatred. Then Anselm proceeded to train the young brother in the severities and austere living of a true monk. Osbern sickened—so runs the story—with a fatal sickness. Then Anselm watched and waited on him like a mother; day and night was he at his bedside, ministering to all his wants, doing everything that might ease his body and comfort his soul; but in spite of care and tenderness

the end came, and as Osbern was dying, Anselm bade him, as a friend speaking to a dear friend, to make known to him after his death what had become of him. Osbern promised, and so passed away.

During the funeral service, as Anselm sat alone in the church weeping for his dear departed friend and pupil, and praying, he fell asleep, and as he slept he dreamed. He saw in his dream certain very reverend persons enter the room where Osbern had died, and sit round for judgment; and as he wondered what the doom of his dead friend would be, Osbern entered, pale as a man just recovering from grievous sickness. Three times, he said, had the old Serpent risen up against him, but three times he fell backwards, and the bear-ward of the Lord had delivered him. Then Anselm awoke, and believed that Osbern's sins were pardoned, and that God's angels had kept off his foes as the bear-wards keep off bears. "Wherever Osbern is," he afterwards wrote to Gundulf, the bishop of Rochester, "his soul is as my soul." Anselm prays his friends to offer for Osbern the prayers and masses which they would offer for himself. "I pray and I pray," he writes to Gundulf; "remember me and forget not the soul of Osbern my beloved; if I seem to burden you too much, then forget me and remember him."

In the year 1078, when Herlwin, the abbot and founder of Bec, died, Anselm became abbot. During the fifteen years of his rule over the now illustrious house of Herlwin, he became known in England, and indeed throughout the western church, as one of the profoundest theologians and deepest thinkers of the age. But singular as were his gifts of intellect, his principal title to honour in his own days was his widespread reputation of being a rarely just and holy man, the friend of every living creature, "the loving and sympathising Christian brother, full of sweetness, full of affection, full of goodness, full of all allowances and patience for others, whom men of all conditions liked to converse with, and whom neither high nor low ever found cold in his friendship."*

When Lanfranc died, "there was no count in England," his faithful biographer tells us, "or countess, or powerful person, who did not think that they had lost merit in the sight of God if it had not chanced to them at that time to have done some service to Anselm, the abbot of Bec"; and there is no doubt that when the trusted friend and minister of the Conqueror, full of years and honour, passed to his rest, the eyes of most serious churchmen in England looked to Anselm as the only fit successor to Lanfranc at Canterbury. But the Red king had other views regarding the church, as we have seen, and felt no desire to place the saintly Anselm in a position where his great influence would be surely used to protect a church marked out by him for plunder and degradation. So for several years Lanfranc had no successor, and the great revenues of the arch-see, with many another smaller ecclesiastical spoil, found their way into the royal treasury.

In the year 1093, however, when the scandal of the vacant archbishopric had lasted well-nigh four years, William Rufus found himself at Gloucester grievously sick—sick, as he and many others deemed, unto death. Anselm was then in England.

* Dean Church: "Life of Anselm."

Some months before he had come over, on the urgent and repeated prayer of Hugh Lupus, the powerful earl of Chester, to consult and advise on church matters in his earldom. Rufus, for some reason now unknown, had refused to allow the abbot of Bec to leave the kingdom, and during the king's grave illness Anselm was in the immediate neighbourhood of Gloucester. Things grew worse with king Rufus, and those round him hoped or feared that the end of the wicked sovereign was close at hand. For the first time it seemed as though the old pagan spirit of the ancestors of the Red king failed him, and he turned, dying as he fancied himself to be, to the consolations of the religion he had so long flouted. In all haste the holy Anselm, who had the greatest reputation of all in his time for that higher knowledge of soul-healing, was sent for. The king confessed his many sins, and promised to do all by way of reparation that Anselm required, pledging himself if his life were spared, in the words of the English Chronicle, "to correct his life, to sell no more churches, nor to let them out to farm, but to defend them by his kingly power, to take away unrighteous laws, and to establish righteous ones."

But the great question still remained to be settled, who was to be archbishop of the long-vacant see of Canterbury? The bystanders looked for some court favourite —some royal clerk like the all-powerful Flambard—to be chosen by the sick man. At last the name was pronounced by the king. "I choose," said Rufus, "the holy man Anselm." In an agony of fear and repulsion, the abbot of Bec refused the proffered dignity. Then followed a strange scene in the royal sick-chamber. The very room is perhaps still with us—the room adjoining the old solar in the abbot's apartment, with its quaint and beautiful Norman ornaments of the end of the eleventh century, adjoining the vast abbey of Serlo at Gloucester, now part of the Gloucester deanery. Prelates, priests, clerks, monks, flung themselves at Anselm's feet, but the abbot would not yield. "Bring a pastoral staff," someone cried; and surrounding the struggling Anselm, they pushed him close up to the king's bedside, and the sick king offered him the staff. Anselm clenched his fist. The bishops and the bystanders forced the fingers open, and the pastoral staff was pressed into Anselm's unwilling hand. The old man, it is said, cried out with pain, exclaiming, "*Nolo, nolo, non consentio*"; but in spite of his resistance he was hurried, as it would seem, into the adjoining abbey-church, while the "*Te Deum*" was hastily sung over him, and thus Anselm became archbishop.

The king recovered, contrary to expectation, and then began a long and obstinate contest for the rights of the church between Rufus and Anselm. For no sooner had the Red king regained his health and strength than, forgetful of all his promises, he recommenced his work of oppression and misrule. But now the church possessed a chief able and willing to confront its powerful and remorseless royal enemy.

Anselm might well shrink from the splendid burden of the archbishopric forced upon him by the sick king at Gloucester in the Lent of 1093. He had lived at Bec for thirty-three years as a simple monk, prior,

and abbot, and for one like Anselm the Norman monastery had been a very happy and congenial home. Loved and honoured not only in his own famous house of prayer and teaching, but far beyond the comparatively narrow circle of Bec, he felt that both as a teacher and student he was

SEAL OF ANSELM. (*British Museum.*)

playing his part well and faithfully in the world. A profound thinker and theologian, he possessed ample leisure in the still cloisters of Bec to pursue those studies in which he had attained a world-wide distinction, and he was conscious that the exchange from the retirement of the quiet monastery to the ceaseless distractions, to the never-ending cares, to the bitter hostilities, which would of necessity belong to the high office of primate of the English Church when such a king as William Rufus was reigning, would not only destroy all his earthly happiness, but, what was far more important in his eyes, would probably mar his future usefulness as a teacher, thinker, and writer.

Some such thoughts as these were in his mind when he bitterly exclaimed to the bishops and nobles, after the hurried service of his election to the archbishopric, "They knew not what they were doing; they had yoked together to the plough the untameable bull and the old and feeble sheep, and no good could come of the union." By the image of the plough the new archbishop pictured the Church of England. This plough was drawn by the king and the primate. To the fierce king, who he felt would speedily recover from his sickness, they had joined a poor weak man who would only be the victim of a violence which he would be powerless to prevent. However, Anselm felt it was now the will of God, and he nerved himself to the long and bitter conflict. Never again for fourteen long years did he enjoy rest or quiet, and when peace came to him he was an old and dying man.

The contest between Anselm and the crown had indeed a momentous influence upon the fortunes of the English church. The king, as Anselm had foreseen, rapidly recovered; with health came forgetfulness of all his promises of amendment. Eadmer, Anselm's biographer, who saw it all with his own eyes, writes with terrible clearness of the misery and suffering through the whole realm. "Nothing," he says, "was ever seen like it before in England." "Be assured, bishop," said Rufus, speaking of his late grave illness, one day to Gundulf of Rochester, "that by the holy face of

Lucca (the Red king's favourite oath), God shall never have me good for the ill that He has brought on me." In these evil days the unhappy church was a principal sufferer. The buying and selling of church preferment went on as shamelessly as ever; unbridled licence of manners everywhere prevailed; Christianity had well-nigh perished in many men, and the influence of its teachers was rapidly waning under the evil cloud of disgraceful simony. Archbishop Anselm gravely remonstrated, and worked with hand and brain against this corrupt state of things; and his great office, and the deep love and veneration with which he was generally regarded, made him an opponent to the king and his ministers of no small importance and weight. The most bitter hatred was excited by Anselm's championship of law against the king's unlaw; hence the beginning of the long bitter quarrel between the king and the archbishop. The causes alleged by Rufus and his advisers were, after all, fictitious and mostly vexatious; the real reason of the long enmity was Anselm's determined opposition to wrong.

ST. GABRIEL'S CHAPEL, THE CRYPT, CANTERBURY.
(*Built in the time of Anselm.*)

The first pretext for the fierce quarrel was the question of acknowledging Urban II. as lawful Pope. Once more in Rome there was a dispute as to the succession, and the legality of Urban's election was disputed. Anselm would have his archbishop's pall from Urban, whom, in common with other

high ecclesiastics in Normandy, he had already recognised as the lawful bishop of Rome. Rufus maintained that until he, the king of England, had acknowledged Urban as Pope, no pall for Canterbury could be received. That this was only a pretext for quarrelling with Anselm was soon apparent, for Rufus sent an embassy to Rome which quickly acknowledged the justice of Urban's claims ; and then the pall, at Rufus's own request, was sent to England by the hands of Walter of Albano, the Pope's legate. The king then claimed the right of giving it himself to the archbishop, but this dispute was at length settled by the legate placing the pall upon the high altar of Canterbury cathedral, and Anselm taking it himself from its silver box and laying it on his own shoulders. The stern conflict between the king and the champion of right and justice went on, however, as bitterly as ever.

The next pretext for humbling the archbishop was more skilfully chosen by William Rufus and his ministers. In the new Norman constitution the archbishop was a great temporal baron, and for his vast estates owed the king feudal service, and was liable for an important contribution towards the state expenses, especially in war time. It was in the year 1096 that a great opportunity presented itself of extorting money. Duke Robert pawned or sold his Norman duchy to his brother William for a great sum, to enable him to equip a force for the famous Crusade war which then was agitating the western world. It was a hard time for England, which had to find for its king this sum of money, for which the ducal coronet of Normandy was to be purchased. The lands were sacked ; the churches were despoiled of their hallowed treasures, such as their gold and silver reliquaries, their priceless volumes of the Gospels bound in precious metals encrusted with costly gems. Anselm was called upon for a contingent of soldiers and for money. The king scornfully rejected the archbishop's offering, and as his feudal lord summoned him to his court as a defaulter. Anselm felt that he would obtain neither justice nor mercy at the king's hands, and, utterly wearied with the hopeless contention and persecution, determined to seek counsel and strength and direction from the head of the church at Rome.

On two memorable occasions already had a great subject presumed to appeal to Rome from the decision of the king and his council—once in the far-back times of Wilfrid in the seventh century, and again in the days of Edward the Confessor, when archbishop Robert of Jumièges (A.D. 1052), deposed by king and Witan, had appealed to the reigning Pope. In both these instances the papal rescript had been disregarded. Anselm referred his case to Rome, but not without strenuous and prolonged opposition from the king, and not without successive meetings of the Witan of England refusing his request. "Yet who can dare blame Anselm," writes our scholarly historian,* "for appealing from mere force and fraud to the only shadow of right that was left on earth? In appealing to Rome in the person of Urban, he at least appealed to something higher than the personal will of a profligate and capricious tyrant." In England, it

* Professor Freeman.

must be remembered, "Anselm had stood out only for right and liberty; he, the chief witness for religion and righteousness, saw all around him vice rampant, men spoiled of what was their own, justice, decency, honour trampled under foot. Law was unknown except to snare and oppress. Against this energetic reign of misrule and injustice a resistance as energetic was wanted. Anselm resisted lawlessness, wickedness, oppression, corruption. When others acquiesced in the evil state, he refused, appealing from force and arbitrary will to law. It was idle to talk of appealing to law in England; its time had not yet come. But there was a very real and living law in Christendom—on *it* Anselm cast himself—it was the only appeal practicable then from arbitrary rule to law."*

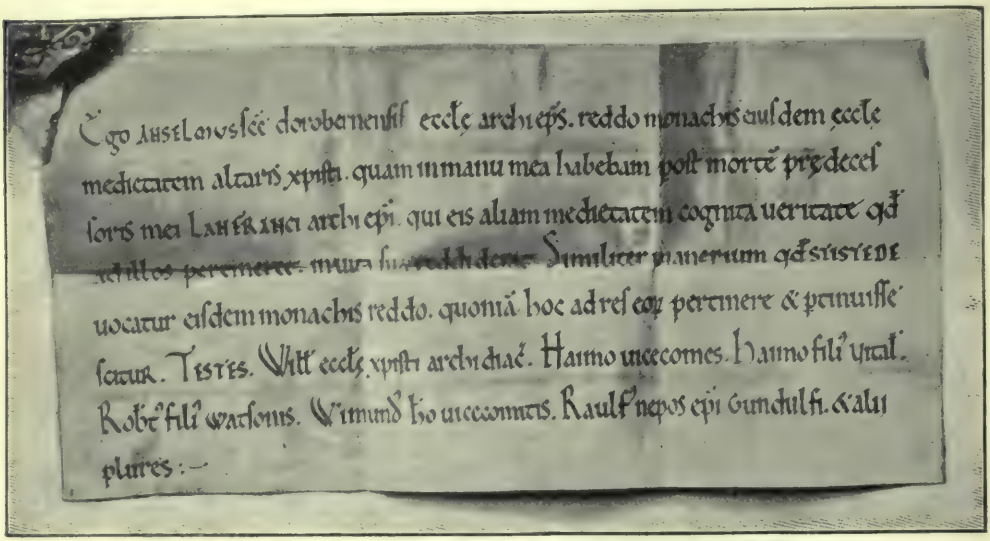
That the cry of Anselm to Pope Urban II. against the lawless tyranny of king William Rufus gave an enormous impetus to the ever-growing claims of Rome, is indisputable. "They grew, did these claims, as we shall see, to be shamefully abused; they had in their turn to be resisted, restrained, and at last, in England, to be expelled. But there is no reason why at the time when Anselm laid his righteous cause and the cause of his church before the court of Rome it should not have been the best, perhaps the only defence of the greatest interests of mankind against the immediate pressure of the tyrannies and selfishness of the time."†

Yes; who can blame Anselm? He stood quite alone in his conflict with the world-rulers. The English bishops of his time were, it is true, able men, but they were more or less creatures of Rufus; loving the world and its pleasures and ambitions too well, they were men who stood altogether on a lower platform than their saintly and brave archbishop, and gave him but scant support. Again, in estimating this act of Anselm, which bore such disastrous fruits in after-years, it must not be forgotten that another and one more powerful by far than the holy Anselm had already set the example of referring great causes to the arbitrament of the supposed apostolic see. Never had the mighty father of Rufus won the fair heritage of England for the Norman, had he not invoked the same awful spiritual power for his own ends, and under the banner of Urban's predecessor, Alexander II., fought the fatal field of Hastings. It was the Conqueror who had first placed the Pope upon a supreme throne of appeal, and rendered the subsequent appeal of Anselm possible.

At last, the scornful permission of the king was given to Anselm to leave the kingdom if it pleased him; but the permission was rather granted to a voluntary exile forsaking his citizenship and its duties, than to one going forth on a solemn and momentous mission. The instant the archbishop left the shores of England, the vast property and lands of the arch-see were seized as the rightful heritage of the royal treasury. But the parting scene between king and archbishop was a strange one, and tells us something of the commanding personality of Anselm, and of the marvellous influence his presence exerted even over such a king as Rufus. He went—says the story—to see his master for the last time before he started. "My lord," he said to his king, "I go; would it had been with your good

*† Dean Church: "Life of St. Anselm."

will. Now, not knowing when I shall see you again, I commend you to God, and as a spiritual father to his beloved son, as the archbishop to the king of England, I would fain before I go, if you refuse it not, give God's blessing and my own." "I refuse not thy blessing," the king answered. He bowed his head, and Anselm lifted his right hand and made the sign of the cross



CHARTER OF ANSELM TO THE MONASTERY OF CANTERBURY. (*British Museum.*)

on him ; and so they parted. Rufus never looked on the face of Anselm again. The tragedy of the New Forest happened before the exile returned.

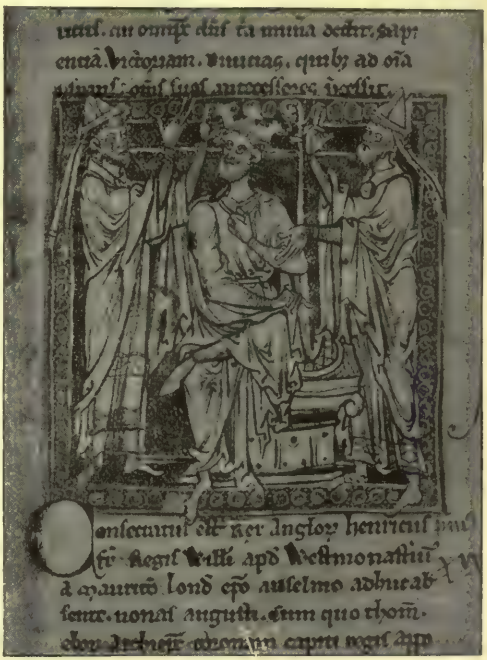
For the next three years Anselm dwelt abroad. It was a comparatively peaceful time, but that the thought continually must have haunted him—what of the great charge he had thrown up? It was not in his power, surely, to lay it down at his pleasure. The delight he experienced in those deep studies he pursued with so much success at that time, in the intervals of his journeyings, must have been sadly marred by the consciousness of the awful responsibilities which were still his! During this absence of three years, however, wherever Anselm went he was received as a most honoured guest. At Rome, Pope Urban entertained him with every mark of sympathy and respect ; even spoke of him as his equal, as the patriarch or pope of a second world. But though Urban addressed grave remonstrances to the English king on the subject of the intolerable grievances with which the English church was oppressed, he feared by any strong pronouncement in favour of Anselm to excite the enmity of so powerful and unscrupulous a sovereign. During Anselm's stay in Italy he was invited to be present at the council of Bari in 1098. There, as the most famous living theologian, the English archbishop was called on to defend the language of the western creed

against the charges which the Orientals and Greeks brought against it—a task which Anselm performed with consummate skill. After a lengthened stay in Rome, the Pope still temporising in the matter of the dispute between the archbishop and Rufus, Anselm went to Lyons, where for a time he assisted the prelate of that great see.

During all this lengthened period of Anselm's absence, William Rufus spent on his wars and wicked pleasures the vast revenues of Canterbury and of many other of the vacant sees and abbacies, continuing to extort money and gifts on all sides and on all pretexts from the church. In the course of the last year of his reign the terrible Red king reached the height of his power. He was absolute lord from the Scottish border to the centre of western France in the Maine country. Abroad, there was no enemy to threaten his vast power. At home he was able to work his wicked will unhindered, unreproved. The church was entirely submissive to his wishes, agreeing to his ever-growing exactions, if not without murmur, at least without strong remonstrance. The one man who had the will and power to resist his imperious and impious will was abroad, apparently enduring a hopeless exile.

But the end of that wicked prosperous life was at hand. It was in the year 1100 that Anselm determined to give himself altogether to those sacred studies in which he won so world-wide a reputation. He had retired to the abbey of Chaise-Dieu in Auvergne, when in his seclusion he was surprised by the visit of two well-known friends—the one from Bec, the other from Canterbury. They were closeted for a time with the great scholar, when the immediate attendants of Anselm heard from the student's cell the sound of bitter weeping. The exile had just learned from his visitors the news of the mysterious sudden death of Rufus, the king of England, his relentless enemy, in the New Forest glades.

Never, perhaps, had so hated a monarch passed away. The halo which ever surrounds a king, invested with a kind of sacredness even the poor, disfigured corpse of Rufus; so a grave was hastily prepared



CORONATION OF HENRY I. BY MAURICE, BISHOP OF LONDON (IN THE ABSENCE OF ANSELM), AND THOMAS, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

(From the original MS. of Matthew Paris' Chronicle in Manchester Cathedral.)

for him in the newly-erected cathedral at Winchester, and William was laid to rest with his royal predecessors, the old West

Saxon kings. Winchester and its minster, with its many royal memories, was not far from the scene of the sudden death of the dreaded sovereign. Cut off in a moment, without shrift, without repentance, the unanimous voice of priest and people pronounced the dread sentence which Pope Urban had feared to utter upon the mighty, reckless lord of so many lands. At the lonely funeral of Rufus, king of England though he was, no bells were tolled; no mass was even said for the soul of the wicked prince. No cross, no sacred symbol, no word of praise or hope, was engraved on the tomb of William Rufus. Men felt that for *him* prayers were hopeless.

Immediately on the king's death the exiled archbishop was summoned back to England in hot haste. The monks of Canterbury, the great lords, and, lastly, the new sovereign, Henry Beauclerc, all wrote or sent urging his immediate return. The archbishop landed in England in September of the year 1100, and very shortly after we find him with king Henry at Salisbury.

Then began the second series, so to speak, of Anselm's famous disputes with the crown, the results of which had a most important bearing on the subsequent relations of the Church of England with the sovereign and with the Pope. But although the contest between Anselm and Henry lasted well-nigh seven years, it must be remembered that their mutual relations were very different from those which existed between Rufus and Anselm. Henry Beauclerc was a very different man from his brother Rufus. His private moral life was doubtless open to the gravest censure. Cold, crafty, politic, often cruel, with self-interest as his guiding rule through his whole brilliant career, he seems to have excited little enthusiasm among his subjects and contemporaries, and to have won but little love even from his intimates; but on the other hand, in many respects, for that rough, lawless time he was the model of a great ruler, and is so painted by men who were no flatterers. "He was a good man," writes the impartial Peterborough scribe in the national English Chronicle, "and great was the awe of him; no man durst ill-treat another in his time; he made peace for men and deer." The last curious reference applies, of course, in the first place to that excessive love for hunting which was a peculiar feature of the king's family, but it also refers to his studious tastes, for as a naturalist he brought together a collection of strange animals in his park at Woodstock for the purposes of study.

These literary tastes and acquirements were especially remarkable in that rough, rude age. His well-known title of "Beauclerc" is *the* title to honour, perhaps, by which he is best known. Very dissimilar to Rufus, in whom seemed to live again the pagan spirit of the old Vikings from whom he sprang, he ever treated religion and its ministers with respect and consideration, and was known both as a liberal founder and benefactor of religious houses. On his accession, Henry Beauclerc solemnly promised to redress the cruel wrongs inflicted on the nation, especially emphasising his intentions towards the church in the matter of the most conspicuous grievances endured in the late reign. "The holy church of God I make free, so that I will neither sell it, nor let it

to farm ; nor on the death of archbishop or bishop or abbot will I take anything from the domain of the church or from its men till the successor comes into possession." So ran the first article of the royal undertaking. To England, then, full of hope for a happier future, Anselm returned, zealous to infuse a new and nobler spirit into the church so secularised by the evil work of the late king, and not a little demoralised by the worldly spirit of most of the prelates, friends and ministers of the crown, who had been lately appointed.

The first important transaction in the new reign in which Anselm was intimately concerned, was the pronouncing legal of a marriage king Henry eagerly desired—largely perhaps for state reasons—with Edith, the daughter of Margaret, queen of Scotland, and king Malcolm, the child of the old royal Saxon house of Cerdic and Alfred. Edith had been generally known in England as a cloistered nun of Romsey abbey, but the young princess stoutly denied that she had ever taken the vows; and Anselm, after a careful investigation of the facts, with the approbation of an important council summoned at Lambeth, declared that she was perfectly free to marry king Henry. The marriage ceremony was at once performed by Anselm in 1101, with great pomp, and Edith, under the new name of Matilda, was solemnly crowned queen in the abbey of Westminster. This Edith (Matilda) won extraordinary popularity among her new subjects. To her wise influence were, with more or less truth, ascribed the "good laws" which Henry Beauclerc made. Her beautiful character united piety with a great devotion to work and duty. The queen's especial love for the poor was said to be boundless: she is related to have been discovered by her husband washing the feet of lepers; while on the other hand she was a good Latin scholar, and skilled in all the accomplishments of that age. Sacred music, it is said, was her favourite recreation. "Good Queen Maude" became the object of the most earnest affection in England.

But Matilda's posthumous fame, after all, rests principally on her direct descent from Alfred and the kings of the West Saxon house of Cerdic: for from this marriage all the sovereigns of England trace their descent, not only from the Conqueror, but from king Alfred. The following table shows the descent of some of the principal personages of the old West Saxon line of kings, united to the Norman house of the Conqueror on the occasion of this marriage of Edith with Henry I.

Woden. (*From whom descend.*)
|
Cerdic, the first West Saxon king.
| (*From whom descend.*)
Egbert. (*From whom descend.*)
|
Ethelwolf.
|
Alfred. (*From whom descend.*)
|
Ethelred the Unready.
|
Edmund Ironside.
|
Edward the exile, the Atheling.
|
Margaret, queen of Scotland.
|
Edith (Matilda) = Henry I. (Beauclerc).
| |
Matilda = Geoffrey Plantagenet of Anjou.
(Empress Maud.) |
| |
Henry II. (Plantagenet)

But Henry Beauclerc demanded of Anselm, friend though he was, a new and somewhat strange thing. Anselm, who had been archbishop now for some seven years, king Henry insisted, must receive the great office afresh by a new act of investiture at his hands! A small matter this would seem, on first thoughts. Yet it would have involved, if conceded, an acknowledgment on the part of the primate of the English church that on the death of the sovereign the archbishop's commission expired; that his office was, after all, subordinate, and that the dignity therefore reverted to the crown on the death of the king who had bestowed the office. There

Photo: A. F. Colbourne, Canterbury.

ST. ANSELM'S CHAPEL, CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

is no trace of such a claim on the part of a sovereign of England ever having been made before. Anselm absolutely refused to comply with Henry's demand, not only declining any re-investiture, but asserting besides that the king had no right even to invest bishop or abbot with pastoral staff or ring.

This last was a new departure on the part of Anselm. Seven years before it will be remembered, that in the royal sick-chamber at Gloucester he had felt no scruple about receiving the pastoral staff from Rufus's hands, or at a subsequent period about consecrating other bishops who had received their staff of office in the same way. But during those seven years things had changed. The customs which involved this formal investiture of the spiritual office at the hands of a king, had been condemned in one of those Italian councils at which Anselm himself had been present. "Rome had spoken, and Anselm determined to obey." "The question then between Henry and Anselm was in no sense a question of eternal right and wrong; it was a question between the law and custom of England and the innovations of Rome." To Anselm this was no mere struggle "for privileges or for forms, but for righteousness; only in his view it was part of righteousness to yield implicit obedience to a power that he had learned to look on as higher than his own or that of his sovereign."* To him "a reign like that of the Red king was a lesson not to be soon forgotten. Customs which under his father, the Conqueror, had seemed natural and endurable, received a new meaning and a new sting under the policy of the son. The see of St. Peter was the acknowledged constitutional centre of spiritual law in the west—the judgment-seat to which an appeal was open to all, and which gave sentence on wrong and vice without fear or favour. The hopelessness of all justice at home drove him on what offered itself, and was looked on by all, as a refuge for the injured and helpless. The Popes attempted at this period of the Middle Ages to create an independent throne of truth and justice, above the passions and the force which reigned in the world around. It is the grandest and most magnificent failure in human history; but it had not then proved to be a failure."*

Thus the question in dispute between the king and the archbishop was referred by Anselm to Rome, but this time with the full consent of Beauclerc. It was in the year 1103 that Anselm again left England for Rome. He was absent for nearly three years. He left England, however, not a banished man, but as one who

* Professor Freeman.

* Dean Church: "Life of Anselm." The whole of this fine passage is too long for quotation, but his words on the *result* of this view of their office by the great popes — which Anselm in his day adopted—are remarkable when read in the light of events which have happened since Church passed away. "The idea was imperfectly realised, it was marred by the extravagance of assertion, the imperiousness of temper, the violence of means with which these claims were urged; it was spoiled by the inextricable mixture of by-ends with grand and noble purposes, of unscrupulous cunning and crafty policy with intense and self-sacrificing conviction; it was more fatally degraded and discredited by the selfish and faithless temporising and the shameless greediness which grew into proverbs wherever the name of Rome was mentioned. And every succeeding century these things grew worse; the ideal became more and more a shadow, the reality became more and more a corrupt and intolerable mockery."

went with the king's full licence. The king, too, sent ambassadors to Pope Paschal, who in the sequel, as might have been expected, quietly but determinedly supported the views of Anselm. The pleadings and negotiations went on for some three years. The words of Eadmer—"The wishes of so great a man as the king of England were on no account to be overlooked"—expressed the views of many of the Pope's advisers, and explain the reason of the lengthy deliberation, although it was known that Paschal himself felt that from Rome's point of view Anselm was absolutely right. Indeed, a recent council of Lateran had already pronounced on the question authoritatively.

The dispute between the crown and the archbishop at length was settled, through Beauclerc's virtually yielding. Concessions were made to him by Rome and Anselm to enable the king to yield with better grace, but the victory really remained with Anselm. The settlement of the great question was as follows:—King Henry I. granted and decreed that from that time no one should be invested in England with bishopric or abbey by staff and ring, either by the king or by any lay hand; Anselm on his side conceding that homage for the temporalities of the see or the abbey might be done to the king. Thus, by the surrender by the sovereign of the ceremony of delivering the bishopric or abbey by means of the symbols, "the staff and ring," it was openly declared that spiritual powers were not the sovereign's to give; or, as Eadmer tersely expresses the deliberate views of his master, "Anselm would not give his advice that mortal man should be made the door of the church."

It may be asked, what induced so powerful and determined a monarch as was Henry Beauclerc thus to yield? Probably weariness of the long conflict weighed with the king, while the great importance of the concession to Roman views did not strike Henry I., who could not see what a handle such a concession of the crown would afford to future usurpations on the part of the same great and undefined spiritual power. Then, too, it must be remembered that the policy of the Norman kings, inaugurated by Henry's mighty father, the Conqueror, had ever been to recognise the supreme authority of the bishop of Rome. No son of the Conqueror could ever forget the famous reference to the see of St. Peter which preceded the Norman invasion of England, which was fought and won under the shadow of the sacred gonfanon or banner of the Pope. Nor must the personal influence of Anselm be forgotten. No living churchman in that day was comparable to the English archbishop, who was loved and reverenced alike in Canterbury as in Rome. Henry Beauclerc was too far-seeing a statesman not to perceive that "in Anselm he had at Canterbury the greatest Christian bishop of his age;" as it has been well said, the wise English king "was unable to resist the spell and charm of his nobleness, his force of soul, his unselfish truthfulness."

On the life of the Church of England the presence of such a man as was Anselm was not lost. The Norman prelates and abbots of the Conqueror, more conspicuously perhaps those chosen by Rufus, were for the most part able and distinguished men, but statesmen rather than chief pastors; trained as they had been in the

cabinet of the sovereign, instead of in the learned solitude of the cloister. Their souls, too, were not a little soiled by the evil atmosphere in which they had long lived ; they were sadly accustomed to the daily sight of the royal traffic in benefices. Nor in many cases were their own hands undefiled by the universal practice of open simony practised in the days of Rufus. Some of them, however, devoted themselves in good earnest to the raising and adorning of their cathedrals. Magnificent builders certainly were these early Norman bishops and abbots, but they could scarcely any of them pretend to the character of saints. It has been remarked with great justice, that towards the close of Anselm's career the life of the Norman prelates and abbots was becoming more self-denying and spiritual, and that a loftier conception of the work and office of a bishop began to prevail in Norman England. "Such a life as Anselm's was not lived in vain."

One point we find especially urged by the beloved English primate. The decrees of Lanfranc respecting the marriage of the clergy were made vastly more strict, and every effort was made rigidly to enforce them. Members of chapters were not only sternly forbidden to marry, but those who were already married were directed at once to part with their wives. No married man in the future was ever to be ordained. Marriage was utterly forbidden to all churchmen of the rank of sub-deacon and upwards. To this stern legislation there was naturally much opposition, but from Anselm's days onward the rule of celibacy became the universal law of the English mediæval church. "The mass of the married priest was not to be heard," writes Eadmer.

But the end of the great and saintly life was now at hand. Anselm only survived the solemn pact, result of the mutual concession, two short years. He was an old man, worn out with care and trouble, and a long life of ceaseless, restless study ; and his last two years, although he had won much of that for which he had so long and patiently contended, although he was surrounded with all the love and admiration which his beautiful life had so well earned, were years of suffering and weakness. But even in these pain-filled hours he never permitted himself to rest. Frequent and wearing attacks of sickness, ever increasing in severity, continually prostrated him during his last two years. But he worked on unweariedly. In the intervals of the labours attendant upon his great office he still used the pen which had produced so many learned and exhaustive treatises, on the deeper questions which exercise theologians, though the hand was growing more feeble every day ; and several masterly works were the fruit of his dying efforts. Soon every kind of food became loathsome to the worn-out old man. His devoted friend Eadmer lovingly records his closing days. Mentally he continued as strong as ever, though very feeble in the flesh. After he no longer could walk, he was carried every day to the cathedral in a chair. "We who attended him tried to prevail on him to desist, because it fatigued him so much, but we succeeded, and that with difficulty, only four days before he died."

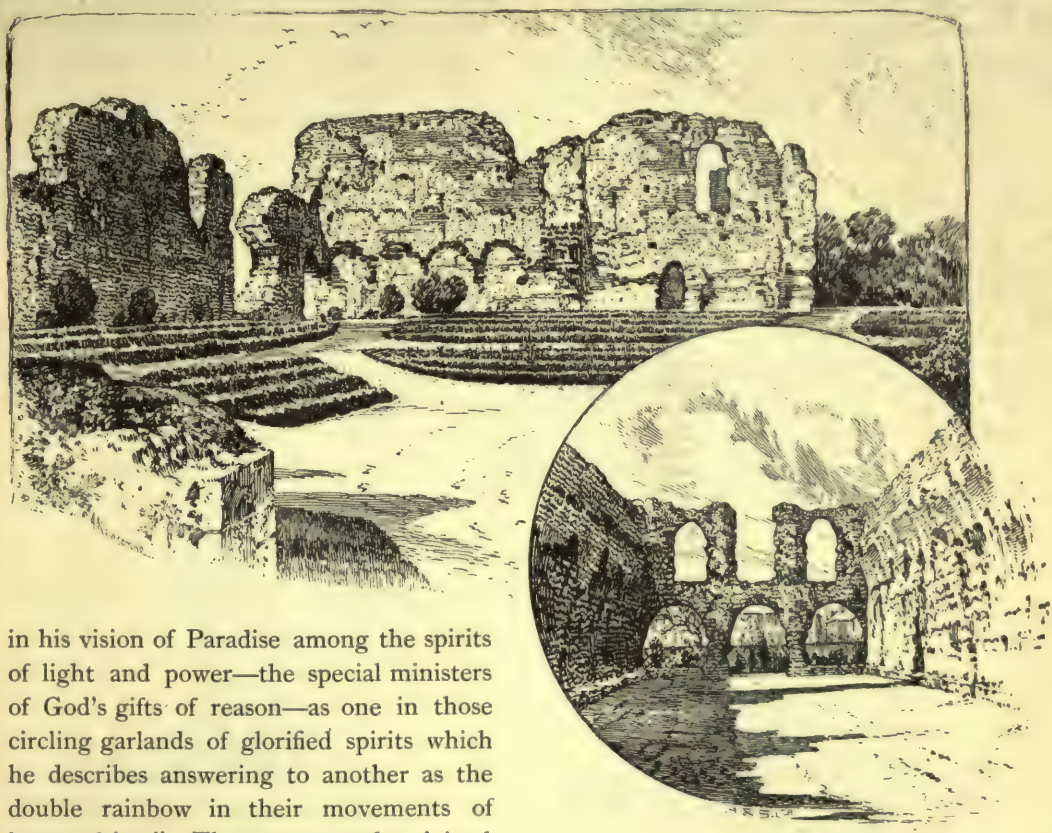
On the Palm Sunday of the year 1109, the daily visit to the cathedral now being

given up, Anselm was conversing with some friends standing round his bed. One of them, speaking of the attendance of the great at the Easter festival, then close at hand, at the king's court, said to the dying archbishop, "Lord father, we understand that you are going to leave the world for your Lord's Easter court." He answered simply and quietly, "It seems so, and I shall gladly obey the summons; yet I should be glad if my Lord would leave me a little longer with you all, for I wish to solve a question now working in my mind about the origin of the soul, and I do not know if anyone will finish my work on this subject when I am gone. I feel no pain; I am only so weak. If I could but eat, I think I might get better again." This was on Palm Sunday. The weakness increased, and Tuesday evening his words had become confused. "Ralph, bishop of Rochester, asked him to give his blessing and absolution on us," writes Eadmer, "and also on the king and queen with their children, and on the people of the land. He raised his right hand as if he were suffering nothing, and made the sign of the holy cross, then dropped his head, and sank down. The congregation of the brethren were already chanting matins in the great church. One of those who watched our father took the book of the Gospel, and read aloud the history of the Passion which was to be read that day at the mass. When he came to the Lord's words, 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table,' he began to breathe more slowly, and we saw that he was passing; so he was lifted from his bed and laid upon sackcloth sprinkled with ashes. And thus, the whole family of his children being gathered round him, he slept in peace."

In reading the above touching account of the last hours of one of the profoundest mediæval thinkers and theologians, who also was one of the most saintly of the long line of archbishops of Canterbury, we feel we are reading the words of an eye-witness of the quiet, solemn scene. There is little to add to Eadmer's graphic picture. A few, but very few marvels are related in connection with the remains of the holy Anselm. We hear of the balsam with which his body was embalmed seeming inexhaustible, and how the stone coffin, which seemed too small, wonderfully enlarged itself; but of the miracles which we should expect to have read of as being performed round the sacred spot where Anselm slept, there is no record. Anselm, with all his greatness, was never a popular saint like Dunstan, who preceded him, or Thomas A'Becket, who followed him after not many years. His body was first laid by his friend and master Lanfranc, before the mighty rood which rose in front of the Canterbury cathedral choir; but subsequently was translated to the chapel beneath the "Tower of Anselm." Even Rome, which owed him so great a debt, for a long time hesitated to enrol him in the calendar of saints. The distinction was asked for, but asked in vain, by Thomas A'Becket. In the end Roderic Borgia, the evil Pope known as Alexander VI., formally canonised him.

But the honour which the populace cared not to give him, and which Rome and the church he loved so well, with a strange neglect, was so tardy in according to

him, has been in later times freely and amply bestowed by the unanimous voice of Christendom. That voice has been well and truly expressed by the great singer of Christian Europe. "Dante has placed him



Photos: W. S. Wyles, Reading.

RUINS OF READING ABBEY.

in his vision of Paradise among the spirits of light and power—the special ministers of God's gifts of reason—as one in those circling garlands of glorified spirits which he describes answering to another as the double rainbow in their movements of love and joy." The great poet has joined English Anselm with the Hebrew Nathan, David's fearless seer, who dared rebuke his master; with John Chrysostom, who spoke his fiery words undismayed before earth's greatest ones; and with Donatus, the famous grammarian:

"Nathan the seer, the metropolitan
John Chrysostom, Anselm, and he whose hands—
Donatus—deigned the primer's help to plan."

"It is his right place in the noble company of the strong and meek, who have not been afraid of the mightiest, and have not disdained to work for and with the lowliest; capable of the highest things, content as living before Him with whom there is neither high nor low, to minister in the humblest." *

Henry Beauclerc survived Anselm twenty-six years, dying, as said the gossip of the day, from the effects of a feast of

* Dean Church: "Life of St. Anselm."

lampreys, a favourite dish with the famous king, at his hunting-seat in the "Forest of Lions," near Rouen. His biographer tells us that his last words were a solemn charge to all his great ones who were gathered round him, to keep the peace and to protect the poor. He was laid, alone among English kings, in the stately abbey he had founded at Reading, built probably with some of the mighty stones which once had formed part of the temples and colonnades of the neighbouring Roman provincial city of Silchester. Only a few ivy-covered fragments of huge walls remain to mark the site of the once proud abbey of Reading, and we possess no vestige of the tomb which covered the body of one of the most renowned of our sovereigns. The contemporary words of the Peterborough scribe in the English Chronicle, which no doubt embody faithfully the estimate of the men of his time, telling of the peace and security which prevailed in England during his long reign, are his best and most fitting epitaph: "He (Henry Beauclerc) was a good man, and great was the awe of him; no man durst ill-treat another in his time; he made peace for men and deer; whoso bare his burden of gold and silver, no man durst say to him aught but good."

One of the many titles to honour of Henry Beauclerc, is his behaviour to Anselm after the final settlement in the year 1107 of the protracted dispute about investitures. The victory had remained with the archbishop, but Beauclerc never allowed the memory of his great concession to affect the cordiality of his after-relations with either Anselm himself, or the church after the archbishop's death. In Anselm the wise statesman-king was conscious that he had for his primate the greatest living Christian bishop, and he loved that such a man should be his real friend and adviser. In the church, too, Beauclerc was conscious that he possessed the most stable element of national life; he felt that in those rude, disturbed times the English people looked on the clergy as their truest friends and champions. With them, therefore, during the greatest part of his reign, even during the period of the dispute, he maintained the closest alliance. "His love of order led him to admit the canonical rights of the chapters of the churches, the synodical powers of the clergy, and (as we have seen in the case of the great investiture question) even the occasional exercise by the Popes of a supreme appellate and legative jurisdiction."*

But this conspicuous friendliness of Henry with Anselm and his general amity with the church, must not blind us to the great importance of Anselm's victory, and to the momentous consequences which resulted from the concession of his claims by the powerful king of England. It is true that the king continued generally to exercise the power, still possessed by the crown, of *choosing* bishops and the higher ecclesiastics; but by giving up the right of *making* bishops and abbots by the delivery of the pastoral staff, the sovereign confessed the meaning and sanctity of these offices, and acknowledged their paramount spiritual and religious character. The king might still select the man for the office; but another and a different power must confer the right of exercising the office in

* Stubbs: "Constitutional History," chap. x.

question. So far, the victory of Anselm conferred a lasting benefit on the Church of England, and secured to it a spiritual privilege which rightly belonged to it. But the victory of the saintly archbishop unfortunately involved, besides, an acknowledgment on the part of the church and sovereign of England of the supreme jurisdiction of Rome; an acknowledgment which Rome was not slow to avail itself of, which laid the foundation of Roman pretensions to supreme authority, and which grew, as we shall see, with years, till the yoke grew to be intolerable, and eventually became one of the chief causes of the "Reformation" upheaval.

ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, TOWER OF LONDON (11TH CENTURY).

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CRUSADES, AND THEIR INFLUENCE UPON THE CHURCH.

Dates of the Crusades—Original Tolerance of Pilgrims by Mohammedans—Outburst of Fanatical Persecution in 1010—Indignation in Europe—Peter the Hermit—Urban II. and the Council of Clermont—War for the First Time Preached as a Christian Duty—Miserable Result of the First Crusade—Jerusalem Stormed in 1099—Check of Mohammedanism—Spirit of Mohammed Enters into the Church—Further Development of Papal Authority—And of Papal Taxation—Redistribution of Property and Aggrandisement of the Church—Development of Mariolatry—Its Connection with the Growth of Chivalry.

WHILST in England and in the Continental dominions of the sons of the Conqueror, partly from the policy of the Norman sovereigns, and partly as the outcome of Anselm's ideas, a vast impetus was being given to the claims of the bishop of Rome to a universal spiritual empire in the western world, a mighty movement was taking place among the nations of western Christendom, which contributed to the same result. In the year 1095 Pope Urban held his famous council of Clermont in Auvergne, which decided upon the first Crusade. In the year 1099 the allied army of Crusaders took Jerusalem by storm. The second Crusade, mainly excited by the preaching of St. Bernard, was in 1147. The third Crusade, in which Richard Cœur-de-Lion was the prominent figure, was in 1191. There were several other Crusades between 1191 and 1275, of more or less importance; but with Pope Gregory X., who died in 1276, these strange and terrible wars came to an end. For nearly two centuries they had played an important part in the history of the church and the world.

The immediate cause of the Crusades was the contemptuous treatment of the sacred sites in Jerusalem by the semi-barbarous and fanatical Turkish conquerors of the Holy Land. This same people persistently maltreated and persecuted the crowds of pilgrims ever journeying from western lands to Jerusalem, to worship at the scenes hallowed by the Saviour's sufferings. Pilgrimages to Jerusalem and the historic scenes of the Saviour's life and death and resurrection, although not belonging to the days of very early Christianity, had grown up from a comparatively early period, as a practice dear to the hearts of men. There is no doubt but that the Holy Land was visited by Christian pilgrims long before the time of Helena and her son Constantine in the early years of the fourth century, when it is stated that the wonderful relic of the true cross was disinterred. The "invention" of the true cross, and the erection of the stately church built over the traditional site of the Holy Sepulchre, tell us that the "holy sites" were already precious to devout Christian souls. Nor was the habit of pilgrimage to Jerusalem from the lands of western Christendom seriously interfered with by the Mohammedan conquerors of Palestine

in the seventh century. Christians were still allowed to worship at the sacred sites, with only occasional interruption, until the early years of the eleventh century, and to maintain buildings and an ecclesiastical establishment at Jerusalem.

In the year 1010, however, we hear of a fierce persecution of the Christians of Syria by Hakim, the fanatical Mohammedan sultan of Egypt. At this period the church of the Holy Sepulchre and other sacred Christian buildings were razed to the ground. But things again settled down in Syria, and once more, during the earlier half of the eleventh century Christian pilgrims from all parts of the world were permitted to perform their devotions in what was to them the most sacred spot on earth. A return even of the quiet, peaceful days of the great caliphs was hoped for. For a long period the caliphs had treated the bands of western pilgrims with courtesy and respect, and we even read of one of the most eminent of these Mohammedan rulers, the famous Haroun al Raschid, presenting to his brother emperor of the west, Charlemagne, the keys of the Holy Sepulchre. This interlude of quiet in the distracted East was, however, of short duration. The fierce race of Turks became masters in Jerusalem, and from that time the Christian population in Palestine occupied the position of despised and hated slaves. The resident clergy became the victims of every imaginable insult. The pilgrim bands were looked on as intruders, hateful to the followers of Mohammed. We hear, for instance, of the patriarch of Jerusalem dragged along the pavement by his hair; while, wounded and mutilated, plundered and ill-treated, the few survivors of the pilgrim companies from the west came

VISION OF ST. HELENA: THE "INVENTION" OF THE CROSS.

(From the picture by Paul Veronese in the National Gallery.)

back to Italy and France, Germany and England, with lamentable stories of their wrongs, with bitter memories of the shameful insults done to sanctuaries so dear to every Christian soul.

As the eleventh century drew to a close, the story of the wrong-doing of the infidel had excited the bitterest indignation throughout Christian Europe. It only needed a match to be applied to the slumbering fires, to kindle a terrible conflagration. This match was applied by a wandering pilgrim-monk, who had seen himself the scenes he so eloquently and pathetically painted. Peter the Hermit, for that is the name by which he is known in history, passed through Italy, crossed the Alps, and then in western Europe told his tale. He preached now in the pulpit in great churches, now on the roadside, now in market-places; his moving eloquence stirred the multitude wherever he appeared. His influence was marvellous; all ranks and orders were excited by the news he brought them of the shame done by the unbeliever to the sacred places, of the cruel sufferings inflicted on the crowds of devout pilgrims to the Holy Land.

Amongst those so moved, the principal person was the Pope Urban II., who with heart and soul put himself at the head of the universal movement. It was indeed a splendid stroke of policy for Rome. Still, it would be unfair in the highest degree to ascribe Pope Urban's action entirely or even mainly to mere policy. Urban was an intensely religious man, and to him the Crusade he inaugurated was indeed the cause of God. But still he could not have been blind to the enormous power which his act of putting himself at the head of so wide-spread a popular movement would win for the Papacy. Urban, once a monk of Cluny, had been the friend and confidant of the great Hildebrand (Gregory VII.), and had by him been named as fit for the succession to the chair of St. Peter. As far back as 1074 Hildebrand had dreamed of uniting western Christendom in one mighty effort for the rescue of the Holy Land and the sacred sites, but the time then had not come for the supreme effort; now, mindful of the far-seeing plan of his wise master, Urban, witness of the wide-spread general excitement aroused by the preaching of Peter the Hermit on the sufferings of the Christian pilgrims and the insults offered to the holy sites, saw that the moment was at hand for the realisation of the great design of a universal western Crusade which Hildebrand had first conceived.

It was at Clermont in the Auvergne, where met the famous council summoned by Pope Urban to consider the question of a general Crusade. It was a vast and mixed assembly that gathered together at the bidding of the bishop of Rome, in the year 1095. It included thirteen archbishops, two hundred and twenty-five bishops, eighty crosiered abbots, and many other ecclesiastics, some of distinguished rank and reputation, besides an almost countless assemblage of laymen, many of them of the highest rank. Never, perhaps, did a single speech of man work such extraordinary and lasting results as did the words of Pope Urban II. at Clermont. We have several reports of that famous and inspiring speech of the Pope. He dwelt on the sanctity of the Land of Promise, the land chosen of God; of the

Holy City, hallowed by the life and death of the Saviour. In the chosen Land of Promise and in the Holy City the foul infidels now were lords. Then Urban painted the present state of ruin and desolation of the Temple and the Holy Sepulchre, and told them how shamefully were Christian men and women, who as pilgrims went to worship in those sacred spots, treated in the holy precincts. And finally, perhaps for the first time in Christian story, appealing to the passion of the soldier at the same time with the fervour of the devotee, he proclaimed the solemn duty of undertaking this deadly war, promising that, in the fierce strife to which he urged them, the Saviour Himself, the God of battles, would be their leader and commander; while to the man who would take up this sacred cause the Pope in his burning address offered instant absolution, even from the most deadly sins. The happy soldier who might fall in this glorious war, the chief bishop in western Christendom dared to assert, would pass at once into Paradise and eternal bliss.

At the close of Pope Urban's speech one loud cry broke forth from the vast assembly, "It is the will of God; it is the will of God!" The result of the Clermont council is well known. A war of Christendom with Mohammedanism was proclaimed. A vast undisciplined multitude was gathered together from all European countries, under Peter the Hermit and a knight called Walter the Pennyless. These marched towards the east by way of Hungary, and perished most of them miserably by myriads. Scarcely one of the divisions of this great host ever reached even the frontiers of the Holy Land.

But the decrees of Clermont sent forth at the same time another and very differently equipped army, under the leadership of some of the most notable chiefs of Europe—men like Godfrey de Bouillon, Bohemund, bishop Odo (the Conqueror's brother), duke Robert of Normandy (the Conqueror's eldest son)—with many other counts and princes innumerable, bearing the noblest names in Europe, men of the highest rank. This host, after hard fighting and tremendous losses, were completely successful. Finally, in the last year of the century they stormed Jerusalem, and after one of the most fearful massacres which history relates, entered the Holy Sepulchre as victors, drunken with fury, their garments dyed with the blood of the hideous slaughter, and there wept, knelt, prayed. Over the conquered Holy Realm, conquered for only a comparatively speaking brief season, one of the most popular and most distinguished of the chiefs of the allied bands of Crusaders, Godfrey de Bouillon, was elected king; but —strange combination of hideous cruelty with a real humility—Godfrey refused to wear a golden crown in Jerusalem, where his Redeemer had worn a crown of thorns.

Looking, however, down the ghastly perspective of the Crusades, a period stretching over nearly two centuries, we have in this history of ours only to glance over the *effect* of these strange and awful wars, in which such enormous numbers of human lives were thrown away, upon the Christian church generally, and especially upon the church of our own England.

The first effect was to roll back for ever the advancing tide of Mohammedan invasion, which for a long period had spread

a deep panic through Christendom, especially in the southern parts of Europe. That wave was first broken by Charles Martel, Charlemagne's grandfather, at the battle of Tours in the eighth century. But the danger was very real again in the eleventh century, and the fairest provinces of southern Europe were again seriously threatened. The Crusades for ever warded off this danger from Christendom.

But with the defeat of Mohammedanism by the Crusaders, the spirit of Mohammedanism, alas! largely entered into Christianity. "It would be impossible to conceive any more complete transformation than Christianity underwent during the period of 'Crusades,' a transformation that left, even after that long period, an enduring impress upon the religion of the Crucified. Its divine founder had taught his disciples that they must encounter the spirit of violence and war with the spirit of gentleness and peace; and with rare exceptions this had been the general teaching and practice of Christian preachers and professors. But from the end of the eleventh century, for nearly two hundred years, every pulpit in Christendom proclaimed the *duty of war* with the unbeliever, and represented the battle-field as the sure path to heaven. The religious orders which arose out of the Crusades, such as the Templars and the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, united—strange spectacle—the character of the priest with that of the warrior, and when at the hour of sunset the soldier knelt down to pray before his cross, that cross was the handle of his sword."* This strange and sad fusion of the military spirit with Christianity, the direct outcome of the Crusades, was in all respects similar to the teaching of Mohammed—a teaching thoroughly appreciated and carried out by his wild and fanatic followers, and to which in large measure they owed their rapid and enormous successes.

Another effect of the Crusades, and one that largely affected the future of the church in England, as on the Continent of Europe, was the position they gave to the bishops of Rome. The splendid dream of Hildebrand, of the universal spiritual dominion of Rome, was in part realised, owing to the attitude taken up by Hildebrand's friend, pupil, and successor, Urban II., and the Popes who immediately followed him. It is singular that this enormous upward bound of the Papacy in position and influence took place at the very time when England, largely through the work of the saintly Anselm, was entangling herself ever more and more in the meshes of this same Papal power.

We speak of the Crusades, those great expeditions which appeared and re-appeared, casting the broad shadows of their influence over Europe for nigh two hundred years; but their various influences for good or evil began with the very first of these "holy" wars, which ended in the storming of Jerusalem, and the election of Godfrey de Bouillon as king of Jerusalem, and were decisive as regards the Pope of Rome. That great spiritual potentate, through the agency of the first Crusade, with one great and sudden leap rose in general estimation to a position greater and grander than that occupied by any temporal sovereign, to a position so high that

* Compare generally, Lecky: "History of European Morals," chap. iv.

PETER THE HERMIT PREACHING THE FIRST CRUSADE.

(By James Archer, R.S.A. From the Reproduction published by the Autotype Company, London, W.C.)

men refrained from questioning his title or limiting his power. The Pope, in the last years of the eleventh century, in fact, became the liege lord of the western world, bequeathing this great legacy to his successors in the so-called Apostolic see. The Crusades that followed the first, at intervals, served to consolidate his tremendous and well-nigh limitless powers.

These powers were, in fact, awful. The sovereign prince who, at the bidding or instigation of Pope Urban and his successors, took the Cross, left his dominions under the protection of the bishop of Rome. "The noble who became a Crusader was free from most feudal claims. He could not be summoned to the banner of his lord. Even the yoke of the down-trodden peasant and the serf was broken. They were free if they became soldiers of the Crusading force. The very creditor could not arrest the debtor." The Pope, in theory, was the liege lord of all Crusaders. It is true that in numberless cases this supreme power could not be enforced; but it was often claimed and not resisted; and in theory, probably, no one seriously denied it. Almost incredible were the spiritual promises which this preacher of deadly war, who claimed to be St. Peter's successor, dared authoritatively to make. He offered absolution for all sins—there was no crime which might not be redeemed by this act of obedience—absolution without penance to all who would take up arms in this sacred cause. The Crusader became the soldier of the Church; "the Pope was general-in-chief of the armies of the faith." He assumed this lofty position in the preaching of the first Crusade; he maintained it in theory to the end of these strange wars. The Roman bishop thus obtained a supremacy absolutely unprecedented in the history of the world.

We have before spoken of Papal legates, and have shown how they were—with rare and exceptional instances—absolutely unknown in the Anglo-Saxon church, first making their appearance in England with the Norman followers of the Conqueror. "The Crusades gave a new and vast impulse in all European countries to this form of developing Roman influence and authority. The popular movement of the Crusades supplied the opportunity of sending legates into every country in western Christendom, to preach and to urge the inescapable duty of helping on with men and treasure the holy war waged by the believer against the infidel for the protection and custody of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Thus every court in Europe, every religious house, every church, became familiarised with the presence of the authorised representative of the Pope, who superseded in the person of his legate all regular and ordinary authority."*

The free-will offerings and contributions of the clergy and monks to Rome for this purpose gradually became a regular tax; and thus, imperceptibly, the principle crept in of Roman exactions from foreign churches for objects very different from the one originally contemplated—the holy wars. The vast additions which the Crusades brought to the coffers of the churches and religious houses, at first made such contributions to the Papal coffers an

* Compare generally Milman: "Latin Christianity," book vii., chap. vi.

easy matter; indeed they were generally cheerfully made, and even regarded, perhaps, in the light of thank-offerings to a cause which so largely enriched them. But the time came when the thank-offerings became a hateful tax.

In the history of the Crusades England holds no mean place. But it must be confessed that it was largely owing to the spirit of adventure introduced by the Normans, that England became so deeply involved in the wars of the Crusaders. From Normandy the contingent of warriors who took the Cross was conspicuously large. Its duke, Robert, and its most prominent bishop, Odo of Bayeux, belonged to the first band of Crusaders. Among the more notable sacrifices made by the men of this first Crusade was the pawning of the duchy of Normandy by its duke, Robert, the Conqueror's son, to his brother, the king of England, for a great sum, to enable him to equip himself and his followers for the holy war in a manner befitting his high rank and position. No one among the allied Crusaders, except, perhaps, Godfrey de Bouillon himself, won so great a reputation for valour and skill as did this duke Robert of Normandy, whose conduct during the terrible war went far, in men's eyes, to redeem a wasted and disgraceful career. The largest and most important share, indeed, in these campaigns, which in their after-effects so largely affected and so powerfully influenced for ages all life, both in the church and state, was taken by the Franks—using this term as generally signifying the inhabitants of old Gaul. This we may see to this very day; as the "Frank" still, in Oriental countries, is the common name used for the nations of the west. And among these crusading Franks the Normans of England and the Continent held a foremost place.

The results, also, of these Crusades, especially the wonderful growth of the Papal power we have been detailing, in a peculiar and especial degree affected the life of the Church of England. In England, as on the Continent, the result of a Crusade was considerably to redistribute property. Money was scarce, and the needs of the barons and knights starting on a distant and costly expedition were great. Horses and armour and means of transit had to be purchased for themselves and their followers at a short notice. At such times not a few communes or associations of towns and villages bought privileges and liberties from their feudal lords, privileges and liberties which were enlarged in future years.*

But the great gainers at this juncture were ecclesiastics. No church lands could be alienated; but in these feverish moments of great excitement the church, by gift or still more by purchase, gained large additions to its landed property. Many excellent bargains were made by religious houses and churchmen in the last years of the eleventh century. "At the sight of the red cross, when the purchaser entered the stone-vaulted store chamber, the monk-treasurer was prepared to make the smallest bidding." Lands in every country were comparatively cheap, while all articles needful for the equipment of the Crusaders rose to enormous rates. The pawning of the duchy of Normandy was not the only instance of an important

* See Dr. Storrs: "Bernard of Clairvaux."

principality being sold for crusading equipment. The duchy of Bouillon was parted with at the same time to the prince-bishop of Liége for a great sum of ready money.* But while some sovereign princes, like Rufus, made great and permanent acquisitions, and not a few merchants laid up large stores of wealth which in time became diffused about Europe; while many communes, too, trading upon the sudden and pressing needs of their feudal superiors, laid the foundations of their future liberties and subsequent prosperity, it was the church generally, and especially the great monastic foundations, which were chiefly enriched by the strange fever of religious adventure which infected England and much of western Christendom.

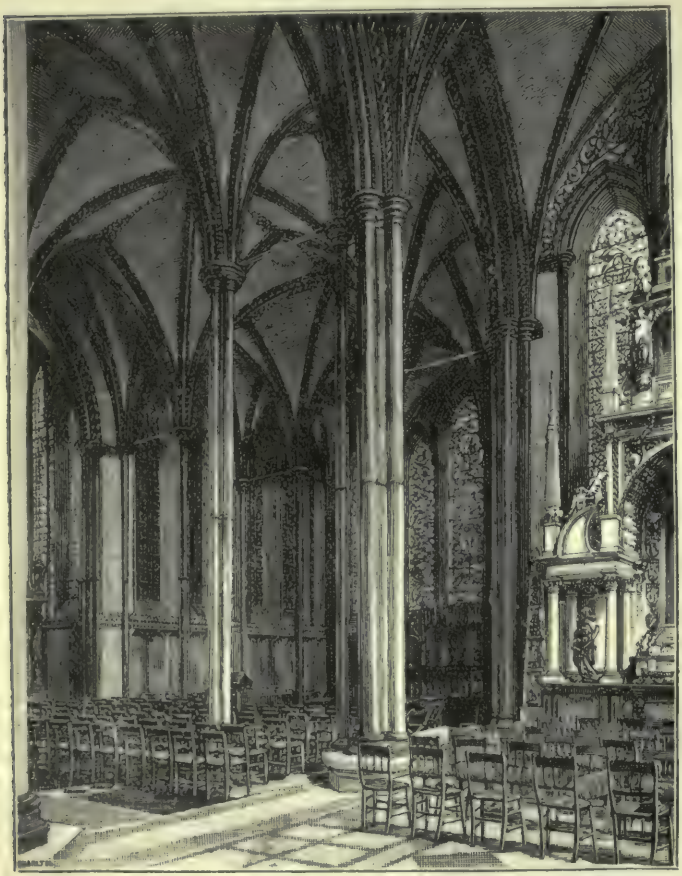


Photo: Frith & Co., Reigate.
LADY CHAPEL, SALISBURY CATHEDRAL (EARLY 13TH CENTURY).

Everywhere on the spot to avail herself of the pressing needs of her neighbours, the all-absorbing church, for the two centuries during which the crusade-fever lasted, silently gathered in more and ever more wealth; accumulating and still accumulating land, peaceably but at the same time surely despoiling the world of its wealth, feeling all the while it was her bounden duty to increase what was deemed the property of "God." Thus in England a large portion of the land of the realm gradually passed into hands which claimed—though the claim was not always made good—exemption from many of the ordinary burdens of the kingdom. The result of this sudden and vast increase of wealth by the church, and especially by the monastic houses, was naturally to excite, as time went on, jealousy and cupidity.

* See Palgrave: "Normandy and England," book iv., chap. xi.

The day came when, in her turn, the church was despoiled by a process less gentle and lawful than that by which she had despoiled the world. "The structure fell sooner because of its inordinate height: the riches would have been safer if less rapidly acquired, and less disproportionate to the wealth of society."*

In the great Norman and mediæval abbeys and cathedrals, erected, some in the latter years of the eleventh, and others in the course of the twelfth century, and amplified and beautified in the course of the two centuries following—the period in history generally termed "the mediæval" —there is no feature more remarkable than that usually important and often carefully decorated portion of the vast building known as the "Mary" or the "Lady" chapel. Take one well-known example of this limb of our churches, the stately and storied cathedral of Gloucester, one of the noblest of the great churches erected by the Benedictine order. There, at the east end of the vast cathedral, stands a magnificent and complete church—for this, in fact, is what it is—still strikingly beautiful in its scarred and mutilated loveliness, dedicated by its skilful builders to the especial honour and worship of the blessed Virgin Mary.* Nor in this

Photo: H. W. Watson, Gloucester.

LADY CHAPEL, GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL (LATE 15TH CENTURY).

* See Dr. Storrs: "Bernard of Clairvaux," chap. viii.

* The present Lady chapel replaces one built in the thirteenth century.

possession of a gorgeous Mary chapel does Gloucester stand alone. "Every mediæval cathedral—indeed, almost every spacious church—had, and, in many cases, still preserves its chapel of Our Lady."*

At what period this extraordinary reverence for the holy virgin mother first made its appearance in Christian teaching, is uncertain. All signs of it are absent in the New Testament. It certainly was unknown in apostolic and sub-apostolic times; and when it first appears, it was of a nature strangely different from the mediæval estimate of Mary on which we are now dwelling. To take an example: In the ancient liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, still in common use in the Greek church, the *Virgin Mary is prayed for.* In this liturgy we read: "We offer unto Thee (God the Father) this reasonable service for the faithful dead, our forefathers, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, . . . martyrs, confessors, . . . but especially for our most holy, immaculate, most blessed Lady the Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary." This most venerable liturgical compilation, no doubt, has been considerably altered and added to since the days of Chrysostom in the fourth century; but emphatically not in the direction of lowering the position of the blessed Virgin, a position which, in the theology of the eastern church, has been estimated, as the ages passed, higher and ever higher, till such a place of eminence has been assigned to her, that no loftier a one is conceivable. Similar testimony is given in the ancient liturgies of St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. Cyril.†

But the doctrinal teaching on the subject of the Virgin developed as time went on, especially in the east, until the worship of Mary appeared as an integral part of Christianity. Among the emperor Justinian's splendid foundations in the sixth century arose many churches dedicated to the "Mother of God." The feast of the Annunciation was already celebrated under Justin and Justinian. Heraclius, we read, had images of the Virgin on the masts of his war-ships, and before long we find Mary the tutelar deity of Constantinople.*

In the western church the development of Mariolatry was slower; but it steadily grew, even in the less imaginative countries of Christendom. From the era of Gregory, the great Bishop of Rome, in the first years of the seventh century, the worship of the Virgin became more and more a part of Christian belief. Already, in the last half of the eleventh century, Peter Damiani, bishop and cardinal, a teacher of vast influence, speaks of Mary as deified, as exalted to the throne of God the Father, and placed in the very seat of the Trinity. "To thee," he says, "is given the power in heaven and in earth; nothing is impossible to thee, to whom it is possible even to raise again the desperate to the life of bliss; for thou approachest the golden throne of man's reconciliation, not only asking but commanding, as a mistress, not as a handmaid."

In western Christendom, strange as it may seem, it was the new teaching which arose out of the wars of the Crusades which popularised, so to speak, Mariolatry; for we can scarcely speak of the attitude of

* Milman.

† Compare "The Divine Liturgies of Chrysostom and Basil," etc., edited by Robertson, 1894.

* See Milman: "Latin Christianity," book iii., chapter vii., and book xiv., chap. ii.

mediæval Christianity towards the Blessed Virgin by any other term. We have already noticed how the preaching and teaching which led to the first Crusade, and for nearly two centuries kept alive the enthusiasm which continually renewed these costly and terrible wars, ever inspiring fresh hosts to take up the Cross, pressed upon men that these religious wars were not only just, but were positively holy and Christian. The result of this strange fusion of religion and war was the production of a new character on the stage of the western world, "the ideal knight of the Crusades and of chivalry, uniting all the force and fire of the ancient warrior with all the tenderness and humility of the Christian saint. This new character sprang from the conjunction of the two streams of religious and military feeling; and although this ideal was a creature of the imagination, although it was rarely or never perfectly realised in life, yet it remained the type and model of warlike excellence to which many generations aspired."*

Chivalry, "at least the religious tone which chivalry assumed in all its acts, language, and ceremonies,"† may be said to have been the result of the Crusades; for before the Crusades chivalry, if it may be deemed to have existed at all, appears to have had no particular reference to religion. But war was now hallowed by religion, and men were persuaded by their teachers that the noblest end to which they could dedicate their lives was the rescue of Christ's sepulchre from the infidel. The Christian knight was inspired by many noble sentiments—by self-sacrifice, by self-devotion for others, especially by compassion for the oppressed and the weak. Now, a great respect for the female sex had always been a remarkable characteristic of the northern nations; and courtesy towards, and protection of the weaker sex, became *the* especial duty and privilege of knighthood. Next, therefore, or even equal to devotion, stood gallantry among the principles of knighthood. The love of God and the ladies was enjoined as a peculiar duty in the teaching of chivalry. In the strange confusion of ideas, this devotion to the female sex took a religious tone. There was one lady of whom, high above and beyond all, every knight was the special servant: the Virgin mother of the Saviour, the rescue of whose sepulchre was the primary object of the Crusades. Thus the adoration of the Virgin, long taught by theologians, became strangely popularised among the Western nations at this epoch; a popularity which showed no signs of diminution for a very long period, and which largely continued through all the Middle Ages to influence and to colour Christian worship throughout the whole of western Christendom.

Religious chivalry, that product of the Crusades, those so-called holy wars, seemed "to array the Christian world as the church militant of the Virgin. Every knight was the sworn servant of Our Lady; to her he looked especially for success in battle." And from the soldier this deep sentiment of adoration passed to the people. Rapidly this worship became the worship of western Christendom. Soon, as we have remarked, every cathedral

* Lecky: "History of European Morals," chap. iv.

† Dean Milman.

and abbey, every spacious church, had its Chapel of Our Lady. Hymns were composed and universally sung in her honour. Liturgies in which her name was the principal feature were introduced. Manuals of private or of public devotion were copied and recopied a thousand times in every monastic scriptorium. A new and startling theological addition was thus generally added to popular Christian teaching. "The incommunicable attributes of the Godhead were assigned to Mary. She was represented as sitting between cherubim and seraphim, as commanding by her maternal influence, if not by authority, her Eternal Son."* The idea of a Queen of Heaven became a familiar one in popular theology; and before the fifteenth century had run its course, the new devotion, largely called into existence by the Crusades, showed the mighty hold it had obtained over the popular mind in England, as on the continent of Europe, by the erection and lavish adornment of such splendid and costly shrines as the great Lady Chapel, already mentioned, of the famous Benedictine abbey of Gloucester. Among the many and sweeping changes which passed over the Church of England at this period of the Reformation, the theologian must give unstinting praise to at least one great change, owing to the stern severity which, with a pitiless hand, cut out from her liturgies and her formularies every trace of this strange, unnatural cult of one who, "blessed among women" though she be, possesses no title to worship, no claim to the adoration of Christian people.

CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY AS QUEEN OF HEAVEN.
(*From a Book of Bible Miniatures written in the 12th Century*)*

* Milman: "Latin Christianity," book xiv., chap. ii.

* This illustration with another are probably by an Italian hand, and were inserted in the book at a later date.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HENRY II. AND THOMAS A' BECKET.

Anarchy of Stephen's Reign—The First of the Plantagenets—Character of Henry II.—His Moral Defects—The Chancellor Becket—Questions between Church and State—Becket made Archbishop of Canterbury—Sides with the Church—The Constitutions of Clarendon—Becket signs them, then recants, and flees into Exile—His Intrigues and Austerities—Apparent Reconciliation—Undone by Becket's Intolerance—Henry's Wrath and Unhappy Exclamation—Murder of the Archbishop—Indignation in the Church and throughout Europe—Henry's Bitter Regret—His Humiliating Penance—Yet the King's Policy Prevails—Learning in this Reign—The King's Death—His Abiding Influence on English Law—Canon Law.

THE reign, lasting nineteen years, which succeeded that of Henry Beauclerc, was a period of lawlessness, anarchy, and confusion. Stephen claimed the crown through his mother Adela, the Conqueror's daughter, but he was stoutly opposed by Matilda, Beauclerc's daughter, somewhiles empress of Germany, and then wife of Geoffrey of Anjou. She had been designated as the queen before his death by king Henry himself. A desolating civil war harassed England for some fourteen years. During this time king Stephen, alternately a prisoner and a conqueror, was utterly powerless to enforce law and order in the land. Men in England in his days did what was right in their own eyes ; the poor and weak were grievously oppressed ; and terrible and almost universal suffering prevailed. Though the civil war only lasted during some fourteen years, the whole nineteen years of this disastrous reign was a period of misery and confusion. The words of the Peterborough Chronicler give us the impressions of a contemporary on the state of things which prevailed in unhappy England in king Stephen's days. "All became forsworn, and broke their allegiance ; for every rich man built his castles and defended them against the king, and they filled the land with castles. They greatly oppressed the wretched people by making them work at these castles, and when the castles were finished, they filled them with devils and evil men. Then they took those whom they suspected to have any goods, by night and by day, seizing both men and women, and they put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with pains unspeakable. Many thousands they exhausted with hunger. I cannot and I may not tell of all the wounds and of all the tortures that they inflicted upon the wretched men of this land, . . . and this state of things ever grew worse and worse. . . . They plundered and burnt all the towns, so that thou mightest walk a whole day's journey without finding a man seated in a town, or its lands tilled. Then was corn dear, and there was no flesh and cheese and butter for the people in the land. Wretched men starved with hunger ; some lived on alms who had been once rich. Some fled the country. Never

was there more misery. The land was all ruined by these deeds, and it was said openly that Christ and the saints slept."

During this period of civil war and misery, although Stephen had the reputation of caring little for the church, no special acts of oppression of churchmen are recorded ; indeed, as might have been expected in such times of bitter suffering, ecclesiastical power and influence made considerable strides. As an instance of the influence of the church even in warfare at this time, the circumstances under which the famous "Battle of the Standard" was fought, A.D. 1138, are worth recording. The king of Scotland (David), taking advantage of the disturbed state of England, distracted as it was with the long civil war between Stephen and Matilda, for the second time invaded England with a savage Celtic following, and harried cruelly all the northern counties. The aged archbishop of York gathered a strong army of northern barons and freemen to resist the plundering foe. At Northallerton, in Yorkshire, they met the invaders from Scotland, who were completely routed. In the midst of the English army during the fierce struggle was a cart bearing a great standard, at the top of which the sacred banners of the three great churches of St. Peter's of York, St. John of Beverley, and St. Wilfrid of Ripon* waved round the consecrated Host. The spirit of the age attributed the signal victory to the presence of these consecrated and sacred ensigns.

In fact, when all was in confusion, and there was a universal disregard of all law, the church remained the only home and sanctuary for the poor and the oppressed of all classes and orders. An enormous number of new religious houses were built ; indeed, no period was so prolific in the establishment of communities of monks and nuns in England as the nineteen war-filled years of king Stephen. The power of Rome had kept continually advancing. We hear of Roman legates in England, and we come across constant notices of appeals to Rome. Even the king himself did not disdain making appeals of this kind in his own person. Increased submission to the Roman see is certainly one of the noticeable features of these nineteen years. There was none to notice, much less to resist, these foreign encroachments.

The year 1154 witnessed the beginning of a new era. The sudden death of Stephen, leaving no direct heir, left the throne open to the son of Stephen's life-long adversary, the empress Matilda—Henry Plantagenet of Anjou, who was crowned at Winchester king of England. The long period of civil dissension and confusion came to an end with his accession. The historian, with good reason, dwells upon the long and eventful reign of this young son of the empress Matilda (Maud), the Conqueror's great-grandson, who for thirty-five years (1154 to 1189) guided the fortunes of England, under the well-known name of Henry II., Plantagenet. It was by his power that the foundations of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland were laid ; some vague acknowldgement of Henry as the superior lord being made even by those parts of the "United Kingdom" which were never really under his sway.

* Some accounts add to these the banner of St. Cuthbert of Durham

It was this first Plantagenet king who defined the relations between church and state, and decreed that churchmen were to be subject to the common laws of the realm. It was through his constitution and assizes that it came to pass, that, all over the world, English-speaking races are governed by English, not by Roman law. He moulded the government of England into the form which more or less has ever continued, and established the judicial system whose main outlines have been preserved to our own times.*

Fortune strangely favoured the young prince who was destined to work so mighty a work among us. At the age of eighteen his great career began, when he was invested with his mother's hereditary duchy of Normandy. A year later his father's death put him in possession of Anjou and the broad Angevin dominions. The year following, his strange marriage with Eleanor, the greatest heiress in Europe, gave him the sovereignty of the vast provinces of the south, including Aquitaine and Gascony, and many a lordship in the centre and south of France ; Eleanor, who was some seven years his senior, divorcing her husband, the king of France, for love of the young Henry Plantagenet. Two years later, on the sudden death of Stephen, he was crowned undisputed king of England at Winchester. His courtiers told him, with pride and with some truth, that his empire stretched from the Arctic Ocean to the Pyrenees. There was no sovereign in Europe — not even the emperor of Germany — who ruled so powerful and wealthy a group of states.

* *Cf.* Mrs. J. R. Green : Henry II.

But the stirring political history of this wonderful reign is not our present work ; we have to do alone with his relations to the church. And no king who ever reigned amongst us exercised a more powerful and abiding influence over the church than did Henry Plantagenet, the sovereign lord of so many lands.

Contemporary chroniclers give us a vivid picture of this king, who occupies so conspicuous a niche in the gallery of our English sovereigns, as he appeared to those who lived in familiar intercourse with him. The picture they present is very different from the ordinary conception of a mediæval monarch, such as somewhat later appears in the illuminated manuscript of a Froissart, in all the bravery of gilded and painted mail ; or on tombs, like the graceful figure which lies in the beautiful shrine of Edward II. at Gloucester, with flowing, embroidered robes, wearing a gemmed crown, with the hands clasping a jewelled staff or sceptre. We see a somewhat rough-looking man, wearing a short Angevin cape, plainly dressed, without gloves, slightly above middle height ; reddish hair, which soon became sprinkled with white, as the cares and troubles of that work-filled, anxious life thickened round him—hair that he kept ever very short, as a precaution against baldness ; piercing grey eyes, a freckled face, a short neck, a broad, square chest, legs bowed from incessant riding ; never sitting, save at meal-times, which were ever brief, for Henry Plantagenet cared little for eating or drinking. Yet on that unlovely face men saw something lion-like. The grey eyes were at times clear and soft, but not unfrequently bloodshot through passion.

His ordinary home was a camp; his companions were mostly soldiers or huntsmen. His chief relaxation was the chase; his overpowering energy found an outlet in violent physical exertion. After a long day spent in hunting, he was never seen to sit down save for supper.*

Many and bitter were the complaints of his courtiers and ministers that there was never a moment of rest for himself or his servants, one day following another in ceaseless journeys from place to place—now for a long day's hunting, now for a visit of inspection and business. He was never at rest. He never spared himself. By arduous labour, by readiness of access to all men, by ceaseless travel, by unwearied patience, he would see for himself how the laws he was at such pains to formulate and to set in motion in his disturbed and unsettled kingdom, actually worked. "O Lord God Almighty," writes one of the sorely-tried confidential attendants of the great Plantagenet, "turn and convert the heart of the king from this pestilent habit [of incessant moving from place to place], that he may know himself to be but man, and that he may show a royal mercy and compassion to those who are driven after him, not by ambition, but by necessity." In these hurried, ceaseless, restless journeys we catch sight of the busy royal secretaries scribbling, at each brief halt, letters, charters, grants, directions, treaties, keeping pace with the enormous mass of business that came to this ever-toiling king of a vast realm.

He became thus known to all his people. He was no mere king hedged round by mystery and awful reverence. His looks, his presence, his jokes, his very oaths, his kindness, his wrath, became familiar to all. A new sense of law and justice grew up in the poor, harassed land under a king who was ever present with his people: hearing complaints, seeing that his judges were doing their work, beholding with his own eye the misrule and oppression of the great and powerful. No one—in England, at least—could be sure that the terrible king was not close at hand, about to require an account of his doings, good or bad. Only the possession of vast and unusual physical strength enabled this strange man to get through this enormous labour of hand and brain.

His intellectual gifts were very great, far beyond those possessed by ordinary men. In learning he was ahead of most of his contemporaries. He is said to have been a scholar in many tongues, though he only spoke familiarly in French or Latin. He chose his friends well and wisely; his intimates were, for the most part, men of deep learning or of saintly life. Whenever he could get a breathing-time from his many business cares, he occupied himself in private reading, or in learning something from his scholarly secretaries. The Plantagenet king was not without elegant tastes. He loved the reading of history, and delighted in the conversation of acute and learned men; and he was happy in the possession of a wonderful memory.

In his public capacity he was the most able and successful politician of his time; and while a great soldier and skilful general, he was no lover of war; being moved, men said, by a strange pity for lives

* See Chronicle of Benedict of Peterborough (Rolls Series). Preface by Bishop Stubbs.

THE BATTLE OF THE STANDARD.

(By permission, from the picture by Sir John Gilbert, R.A., P.R.W.S. In the Guildhall Art Gallery.)

sacrificed, and for sufferings which naturally accompanied the battlefield. The result of his work, his journeys, his restless curiosity, his enormous experience, appeared in his wise and beneficial laws. Henry Plantagenet was one of the most sagacious administrators and wisest legislators that ever guided England; and it has been well said, that when he finally drew up his system of reform in church and state, there was not a single point of principle in it from which his successors found it necessary afterwards to draw back.

Yet in spite of all this amazing activity and zeal for right, and constant endeavour to substitute law and order in place of lawlessness and misrule in that disturbed and turbulent age, which we see and admire with no grudging admiration in the great Plantagenet king, Henry II. was not a good man. Though most of his work was splendid and beneficial and far-reaching in its after-consequences, he can never be ranked with kings like Oswald and Alfred, Edward I. and St. Louis. His moral life and example were evil; his passions were unchecked. Feared rather than loved, dreaded by his contemporaries rather than respected, a prey to an ungovernable temper, no one, ecclesiastic or layman, trusted him or believed him.

What his "religion" consisted in remained, and will ever remain, a riddle to which no solution can be attempted. Daily he attended mass; but those with him saw how in the most solemn moments of the sacred service he would be writing, or even drawing pictures, and occasionally whispering to his courtiers thoughts which occurred to him on state matters. He would spend a night fasting and praying, and in the morning would forget his passionate prayers and fervid resolutions.* No one can say how much reality there was in his bitter abasement and voluntary humiliation after the murder of Becket, the like to which on the part of a powerful crowned monarch had never been seen before!

Was this great sovereign insane? Even in his lifetime men whispered the well-known legend of the diabolical origin of the Angevin house, whence Henry sprang. Was it not most probable that that awful sickness of mind which not unfrequently is the sad heritage of an absolute, irresponsible monarch, at times peculiarly affected the great Plantagenet? One who has made a wonderful study of the man and his times thus powerfully sums him up: "Neither angel nor devil, Henry Plantagenet was a powerful, unscrupulous man, a man of vast energy and industry, of great determination; eminently wise and brave, eminently cruel, lascivious, greedy, and false; and eminently unfortunate also, if the ruin of all the selfish aims of his sagacious plans, the disappointment of his affections, and the sense of having lost his soul for nothing can be called misfortune." †

By the side of the mighty Angevin king, during the first eight years of his reign, stood his favourite and minister, the chancellor Becket. This famous man, who subsequently played so great a part in the story of our church, had been introduced to the notice of the young king

* Mrs. J. R. Green.

† Bishop Stubbs: Preface to "Chronicles of Henry II." by Benedict of Peterborough.

on his first arrival in England by Theobald, once a monk of Bec, the archbishop of Canterbury. Henry took an extraordinary fancy to the young and brilliant ecclesiastic, made him his chancellor, and soon entrusted him with the principal direction of state affairs in England.

Becket, who was the son of the portreeve of London, the predecessor of the present lord mayor, at the age of twenty-four had entered the household of archbishop Theobald, and had soon acquired his confidence and friendship. We have a description of him at this period of his career, which describes him as slight and pale, with dark hair, and long nose and straightly-featured face, blithe of countenance, keen of thought, winning and lovable in conversation, frank in speech, but slightly stuttering in his talk, and, above all, possessing a singular gift of winning affection.

The affection of Henry for his chancellor was singular. The king and his minister became inseparable; in hall, in church, in council-chamber, on horseback, the friends were ever together. Becket, too, like the king, in the intervals of work loved hunting and hawking. The magnificence of the minister seems far to have exceeded the state kept by the king, who was ever a rough, plain man. Becket, on the other hand, loved to array himself in scarlet and precious furs, with clothes woven with gold. His table, too, was sumptuous, and glittered with gold and silver plate. Henry lavished gifts and rich preferments on his favourite, who seems to have thoroughly deserved his affection, and ably to have seconded the king's efforts in the direction of righteous government. Fifty-two clerks, we read, were employed in the chancery under Becket. The archbishop of Canterbury dying in the year 1161, Henry determined that his favourite and minister, Becket, although only in deacon's orders, should succeed Theobald in the primacy. Against the advice of his chief friends, the king forced on the appointment; the chancellor-deacon was consecrated priest, and in 1162 was enthroned at Canterbury, the Pope sending him his pall.

Between the Church of England and the state some grave causes of difference existed at this time, to which the king had determined to put an end. The Conqueror, among other constitutional changes, had separated the courts in which secular business was carried on from the purely ecclesiastical courts. The extensive and general study of Roman or canon law had of late largely increased the pretensions and claims of these ecclesiastical courts, which exercised wide powers over the laity, as well as over the clergy. They alone enforced spiritual penalties: they dealt with cases of oath and promises; they decided as to the property of intestates, and pronounced in every case of inheritance whether or no the heir was legitimate; they declared the law as to wills and marriages. Many vestiges of these ancient rights have survived even to our own times. It was said that in the archdeacons' courts, in the days of Henry II., more money was levied by fines than the whole revenue of the crown. Young archdeacons were now constantly sent abroad to study the Roman and canon law. Bologna was the favourite school for the pursuit of these studies in a law which was to be administered in

these courts, in which the volume of business was ever on the increase. So great, indeed, was it, and so varied was the business which came before them, that those archdeacons who were to act as judges were often kept in deacon's orders, lest the priesthood should be defiled by so much contact with legal and varied secular affairs. Religious men, in view of all the secular business and secular interests with which these important church officials were entrusted, even began to propound the well-known question, which has excited some interest and curiosity, whether in the case of an archdeacon "salvation were possible"—"*an possit archidiaconus salvus esse.*"*

What, however, came specially home to men at this juncture was the comparative immunity which clerks enjoyed from the penalties due to crimes and misdemeanours. We hear, for instance, in the first eight years of Henry's reign, of one hundred murders committed by clerks, who had escaped all punishment save the comparatively light sentence of fine and imprisonment inflicted by ecclesiastical courts.

But the real cause of Henry's own uneasiness at the present state of things was the rapid drifting of the Church of England Rome-ward. The monasteries, owing to various causes, some of which, notably the Crusades, have been already alluded to, had enormously increased in numbers, in wealth, and in power. These religious houses were, for the most part, exempt from all episcopal control, and acknowledged only the Pope as their superior. Appeals to Rome from the Church of England were also rapidly on the increase. Freed practically from the common law of the realm, the clergy looked more and more to the Pope as the supreme judge and arbiter in all their causes. This grave and ever-increasing danger to the state from the interference of a foreign power was viewed by Henry II. with growing uneasiness, and it was with the hope of finding an efficient and loyal coadjutor in the archbishop of Canterbury, in the important reforms he proposed to effect in church matters, that he procured the elevation of his friend and confidant, Becket, to that great office.

Never was anyone so disappointed in an instrument which he had forged to carry out his will. Very soon after his consecration to his new office, Becket resigned the chancellorship, left the king's court, withdrew from all state matters, and devoted himself solely to spiritual things. Never was so rapid a change. The old splendour of living was abandoned, the gay and costly scarlet and gold and rich furs were exchanged for penitential sackcloth and the monk's black cloak. His hall at Canterbury was now thronged with the poor and needy, who were fed from the archbishop's table. Daily was Becket seen in the infirmary, tending and visiting the sick, and even washing the feet of poor travellers, as part of his daily penance. He would spend hours in the cold cloister studying like a monk. Zealous in services and in constant prayers, his whole life and appearance underwent a sudden and startling change. No sooner was he made archbishop than Henry found the subservient and resourceful minister of state merged into the ecclesiastic,

* See Bishop Stubbs: Oxford Lectures (VII.). "The Court of Henry II.," and (XIII.) "Canon Law."

utterly devoted to what he looked upon as the interests of his order, and of the church over which he had been so unexpectedly called to preside. Hence the bitter, irreconcilable enmity between the two once friends—Henry II. and Becket.

The clergy of the Norman reigns have been well described as capable of being arranged under three classes. "There is the man of the thoroughly secular type, a minister of the king and a statesman, who has received high preferment in the church as a reward for official services; there is the professional ecclesiastic who looks to the interests of the church primarily, whose public course is dictated by regard to clerical objects, who aims at a mediatorial position in the conflicts of the state, and has close relations with the great ecclesiastical centre at Rome; and there is, thirdly, the man who, not less patriotic than the first, and not less ecclesiastical than the second, acts on and lives up to higher principles of action, and seeks first and last what seems to him to be the glory of God."* In the first class may be placed such men as Flambard of Durham, Herbert Losinga of Norwich, and William Carileph of Durham, thoroughly secular churchmen, but at the same time able and devoted statesmen. Of the second class, Lanfranc, the great archbishop-minister of the Conqueror, is an admirable instance. In the third stand

BECKET WASHING THE FEET OF BEGGARS.

* Bishop Stubbs: "Constitutional History of England," chap. xiii.

Anselm and, somewhat later in point of time, Hugh of Lincoln. There is a greater difficulty in placing Becket. Until he became archbishop, beyond doubt he belonged to the first, to the secular class of ecclesiastics—chancellor, lawyer, adviser of the crown, unquestionably able and painstaking in each of these capacities. Then he changed, and as archbishop he became the champion of the clergy, the devoted servant of the Pope, the ascetic monk. His admirers, further, rank him as a saint of God, as the equal in his struggles after the nobler life with Anselm and Hugh of Lincoln; others doubt his sincerity, and consider him rather as the consummate actor than the true saint. But there is no doubt that, with all his faults and errors, Becket in the end laid down his life to further the policy to which he devoted the second and more interesting period of his wonderful career.

With or without, however, the assistance of his former dear friend and chancellor Becket, Henry Plantagenet was determined to carry out his purpose; persuaded as he was that it was for the weal of England, firstly, that the perpetual appeals to Rome, a foreign and strange power, should be limited; and secondly, that the powerful ecclesiastical orders should be subjected to the ordinary civil law of the realm. The king determined to bring these vital questions to an issue. So he summoned a Parliament at Westminster, and among other matters insisted on these important points being decided. Becket refused at first to yield to the king's will, but subsequently, with extreme reluctance, gave way. Early in the year 1164 a council was summoned to meet at Clarendon, a royal residence three or four miles from Salisbury, to ratify these important concessions of the church. The two archbishops, eleven bishops, between thirty and forty of the highest nobles, and numbers of inferior barons were present, and the famous *Constitutions of Clarendon* were then agreed to; Becket, after some passionate resistance, giving his consent and approval, thus establishing an English constitution in church and state. By these constitutions the exorbitant powers of the ecclesiastical courts were taken away; the immunity of the clergy from the jurisdiction of the king's courts existed no longer; and the power of appeals to Rome was limited.

Becket, however, deeply repented his concession. He returned to Canterbury, submitted himself to the severest penances, and applied to the Pope for absolution from his oath to support the decision of the Clarendon council. He at once received it. Then and thus commenced the bitter contest between the powerful king and the archbishop. There was no longer any hope of a reconciliation between the two. No trust could henceforth be placed in any promise of Becket, no reliance on any solemn oath which he might take; he would probably soon regret it, and appeal at once to Rome to be absolved from it. A few months later the quarrel came to a head. At a great state council at Northampton, the archbishop was received by the king with studied insult. From Northampton Becket fled as though for his life to France, and thence, in exile for the next six years (1164 to 1170), he conducted, partly by intrigue, partly by invoking the assistance of a

sympathetic but reluctant Pope, a struggle which filled the chronicles of much of the history of Europe during this period.

For two years at a monastery at Pontigny, and then for four years in the French archiepiscopal city of Sens, Becket lived the life of an austere Cistercian monk. The once magnificent and luxurious chancellor, and powerful minister of the mighty Plantagenet king, amazed and edified religious Europe with his awful austerities. On him, perhaps, more than on any man in the western world at this juncture, were men's eyes fixed. The conversion of so famous and powerful a statesman attracted universal attention. He posed as the suffering champion of the church's rights and privileges; and Henry II., king of England, duke of Normandy, and lord of Guienne and Anjou, as the church's oppressor. Something of his ancient magnificence and pomp still surrounded the exiled archbishop, whose retinue of horses and servants and costly table attracted notice; but Becket personally shared in none of these things. The rich dishes were ostentatiously distributed to the poor, while the archbishop partook only of the pulse and gruel of that stern and ascetic monastic order to which he had affiliated himself. Far and wide were his austerities talked of, his long and secret devotions. Men told of his tears and his groans for his past sins, and how at night he would ever and again rise from his bed and submit himself to a cruel flagellation. At times he would even tear his flesh with his nails, and lie long on the cold floor in the solitary agony of prayer. His health naturally suffered from these mortifications, and wild and terrible dreams haunted his broken slumbers. He studied, too, did this strange man, with passionate ardour, and his studies mainly consisted in those records of Roman canon law which supported his views of church legislation, and uncontrolled ecclesiastical power.

Nor was he forgetful during these years of the arts of intrigue and statecraft, of which he was so consummate a master. He found an ample field for these intrigues; for his former friend the Plantagenet king, from his position as lord of so many and such different nationalities, had many and deadly enemies. Not the least formidable of these was the king of France, whose divorced wife Eleanor was now the wife of Henry Plantagenet, to whom she had brought the great inheritance of the south of France. From his place of exile in France Becket now thundered out the sentence of excommunication against the English prelates who loyally supported Henry Plantagenet. And now, in the name of the Pope, from whom he obtained legatine powers, he threatened England with the stern menace of an interdict.

The wrath of Henry against the great and powerful ecclesiastical rebel who worked him so much mischief, almost drove him to madness. For a time no one dared to mention the name of Becket in his presence. But, in spite of all his troubles and vexations, king Henry pursued his work of legislating well and wisely for England. It was in this period of anxiety and trouble that the memorable Assize of Clarendon (in 1166) was drawn up; and the whole provincial administration of

justice in England was by it remodelled.* Thus the six years wore away. For Henry Plantagenet they were work-filled years, years busy with maintaining his authority over his many states, busy with much wise and enduring legislation for England; on the whole, prosperous years for the mighty Angevin monarch. But the quarrel with Becket and its effects, must sorely have embittered king Henry's life during this period. Nor was his conduct towards his enemy wise and conciliatory. Becket was warring for what he deemed a great principle, and Henry seems to have ever treated him as one who was fighting rather for his own hand than for the church which he professed to love so ardently, and apparently did love, as he proved in the end.

Photo: Paul Robert, Paris.

EPISCOPAL VESTMENTS OF THOMAS A BECKET, PRESERVED AT SENS, FRANCE.

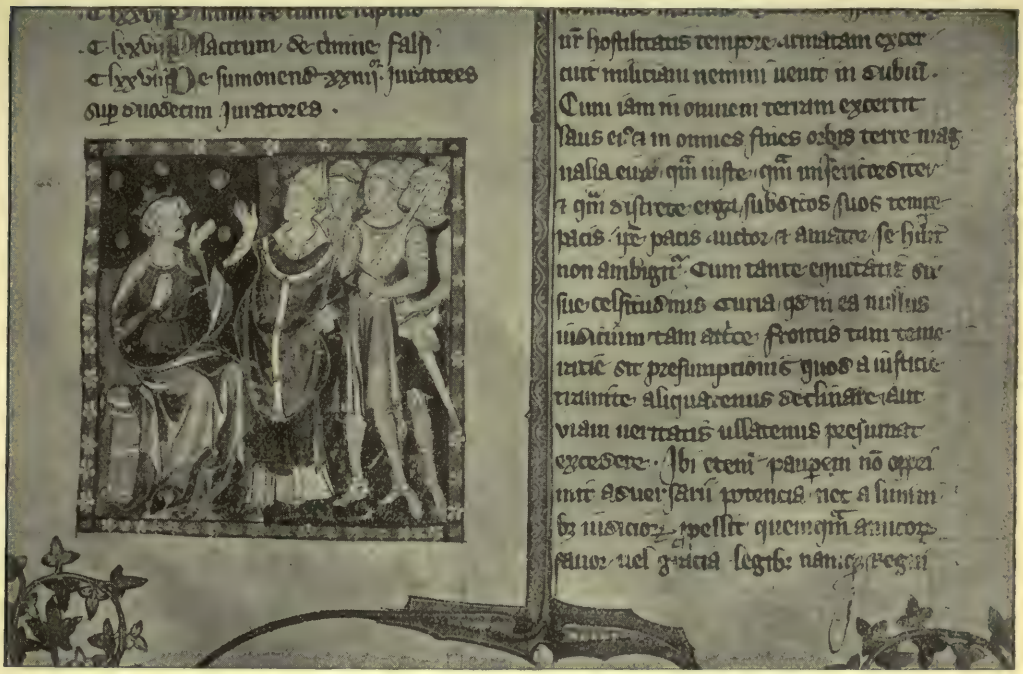
As the six years drew to an end, Becket's position was stronger than ever; for the power of the Pope had been greatly strengthened in the meantime, and there was less reason for Rome temporising and for conciliating Henry than in the earlier years of Becket's exile. It was in the year 1170 that Henry Plantagenet determined upon the coronation of his son Henry, a boy of fifteen. Now the duty of performing the ceremony, the rite of coronation, was claimed by the archbishop of Canterbury as a duty absolutely belonging to the primacy. King Henry, however, insisted upon the ceremony being performed by the archbishop of York. This fresh and galling affront seems to have afflicted Becket and his friends even more than the sequestration of the estates of the arch-see; more than any of the many injuries inflicted upon the exiled champion of church privileges.

The same year, however, witnessed the startling spectacle of the formal recon-

* Compare generally Freeman's "Norman Conquest," chapter xxvii., and Mrs. J. R. Green's "Henry II."

ciliation between the two enemies. Europe was astonished. When things looked darker than ever, at a moment when the intense hatred which existed between Becket and Henry appeared more bitter than before, the two seemingly irreconcilable foes met, and the "kiss of peace" was exchanged. The exact reasons for this sudden change can, perhaps, never be exactly known. Political motives, no doubt, quickened Henry's desire for a reconciliation. The dangers which perpetually menaced his wide and divided realm were probably more threatening than ever; and intense weariness of the long-drawn-out quarrel not unlikely weighed with the king also. Henry Plantagenet may have come to see that archbishop Becket would be less dangerous to his peace within his dominions than without; would be easier to deal with, and perhaps to influence, as archbishop of Canterbury, than as an archbishop in exile.

The meeting between the two once dear friends, but for years now the bitterest enemies, must have been a striking scene. It was at Fretteville, between Chartres and Tours, that the Plantagenet king and the famous churchman met. As soon as they drew near each other, the king uncovered his head and courteously saluted the prelate. The two old friends then withdrew apart; long and earnest was the conference between them. The attendants, we hear, grew weary. The two, indeed, met as though the old friendship had never been



QUARREL BETWEEN KING HENRY AND BECKET, WHO HAD ENTERED HIS PRESENCE SURROUNDED BY ARMED MEN.

(From a 14th Century MS. in the British Museum.)

interrupted. Becket seems to have been very gentle, and the king most conciliatory. The Constitutions of Clarendon were not mentioned: these important decrees were left for a future settlement. Becket dwelt, though, on the late infringement of his rights in the coronation of the boy Henry, and received a promise that the ceremony should be repeated. Before they parted, Becket leaped from his horse and threw himself at the king's feet. Henry would not suffer the homage, but holding the archbishop's stirrup, made him mount his horse again. The reconciliation seemed complete.

Treachery and hatred, though, were in the air. Becket's friends urged him to delay his return to England; they knew his life was in danger. But Becket made light of all warnings. He returned, and was welcomed at Canterbury by a vast procession of clergy, who looked upon him as the champion of their order. Strewing their garments in his way, the devoted crowd chanted, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." But, alas! he came not in peace. Before he landed he sent on letters which he had procured from Rome, excommunicating the king's friends, the bishops of London and Salisbury, and suspending the bishop of Durham and the archbishop of York for having joined in the coronation of the boy-king Henry. There was evidently as little as ever to be hoped from the moderation of the restored archbishop.

The two excommunicated prelates at once hurried across the sea to Normandy, and met Henry Plantagenet at his castle near Bayeux, imploring his protection against the common foe. The king held a hurried council with the prelates; one of them in his anger is reported to have incautiously said to Henry, "So long as Thomas lives you will neither have good days, nor a peaceful kingdom, nor a quiet life"; after which the king fell into one of those wild paroxysms of fury to which he and all the earlier Plantagenet princes were subject. This sudden passion is described in Henry's son (afterwards king John) as something beyond anger. "He was so changed in his whole body that a man would hardly have known him; his forehead was drawn up into deep furrows, his flaming eyes glistened, a livid hue took the place of colour." Henry in his fury became like a wild beast, and uttered the fatal words: "What cowards have I brought up in my court, who care nothing for their allegiance to their master! Not one will deliver me from this low-born priest!" And with these words it is said the king rushed from the chamber of audience.

Among the courtiers who heard Henry's fatal words were four knights, whose names will ever live in the memory of men—Reginald Fitzurse, Hugh de Moreville, Richard le Breton, and William de Tracy. They stood in close relation to the king, filling the offices of gentlemen of the bedchamber. They lost not a minute, but the same evening—it was Sunday, the 27th December, 1170—they left Bar by Bayeux, and the following day crossed the sea and went at once to Saltwood Castle, whose beautiful ruins, partially restored in our own days, stand near the sea on the hill of Hythe. At Saltwood lived a bitter foe of Becket, one Randolph of Broc. They took council with him, and, accom-

panied by a small troop of armed men, galloped at once to Canterbury, the home of the doomed archbishop. They took up their quarters at St. Augustine's abbey, without the walls of Canterbury. The abbot of St. Augustine's, Clarembald, was known as a foe of Becket. From St. Augustine's they proceeded at once on their mission of blood to the archbishop's palace, adjoining the cathedral.*

Four days before, on Christmas day, Becket had preached before high mass in the chapter-house, and had alluded to the Anglo-Saxon martyr, Alphege, whose tomb was on the north side of the high altar of the cathedral. It was possible, said Becket on this occasion, that Canterbury would soon have another martyr. At his words the congregation wept and groaned, and some are said to have murmured audibly, "Father, why do you desert us so soon?" There is no doubt but that Becket was well aware of the danger in which he stood, and of the deadly enemies by whom he was surrounded; but death evidently was to him no thought of terror.

The four knights penetrated without difficulty into the presence of the archbishop, who had just dined and had retired to a private chamber in the palace, where, sitting on his bed, he was conversing with a group of friends. His grim visitors announced that they had a message to him from the king. Three of them had known him well in former years, in the days of his greatness, when he was the chief minister of the king. Becket at this time was in the vigour of his strength; he was in his fifty-third year, his appearance was striking and majestic, his eyes large and piercing, his figure tall. His robes concealed his thin and probably much emaciated body. On their entrance Becket for a time continued his conversation with his friends; at length, turning towards them, saluted Tracy by name. Fitzurse exclaimed, "God help you!" The archbishop crimsoned at the rudeness. Fitzurse continued, "We have a message from the king. Will you hear it in private?" The monks withdrew, but only for a moment; the thought that their beloved master was in real danger from these rough men-at-arms flashed upon them, and they hurriedly came back.

Then followed an angry colloquy between the archbishop and Fitzurse, who was the spokesman during the fierce war of words which followed. In the end the knights left the room in fierce anger, to seek for their arms, which they had left with their attendants. The archbishop's last words, spoken under strong excitement, rang in their ears: "You threaten me in vain; were all the swords in England hanging over my head, you could not terrify me from my obedience to God and my lord the Pope; foot to foot you shall find me in the battle of the Lord. I marvel that you dare to threaten the archbishop in his own house."

As the knights rushed from the chamber, they cried, "To arms, to arms!" and hastily joined their company of soldiers outside. They threw off their cloaks and appeared in full armour, and at once girt on their swords for the fray. All was now confusion and dismay in the approaches to

* For the detailed circumstance of the martyrdom see generally Dean Milman's "Latin Christianity," book v., chap. viii., and Dean Stanley's "Memorials of Canterbury" (The Murder of Becket).

the palace and the cathedral. Only Becket himself was calm; he seated himself again on his bed. His faithful friends, however, perceiving the imminence of the danger, besought him at once to take refuge in the sanctuary of the cathedral, believing that his life would at least be safe there. Partly by force, partly by persuasion, they hurried him down to the cloisters leading to the great church, barring as they went the gates of access. Becket, however, insisted on proceeding with some dignity, and with his cross borne before him moved through the solemn cloister walk towards the cathedral; outside the cloister the din of armed men breaking through the doors was plainly heard.

It was just five o'clock of a winter evening, and the monks were beginning the vesper service, when the archbishop entered. The noise of the armed men forcing their way in terrified the monks who were singing; the service stopped, and the monks fled in every direction. An attempt was made to close and bar the cathedral doors. The archbishop, however, commanded them to desist. "No one," he said, "should be hindered from entering God's house." Only three of his companions remained by him as he calmly waited. The four knights then burst in; they had learnt that Becket was in the church. It was very dark, and the vast cathedral was only illuminated here and there by solitary lamps burning before the many altars. The archbishop disdained to fly, and remained with the three faithful friends standing in the north transept, still known by the name of "the Martyrdom." In the dim light the knights could see the little group at the foot of the steps leading from the transept into the choir.

They hurried towards them. Fitzurse, ever the speaker, roughly called out, "Where is Thomas Becket, traitor to the king?" and again, "Where is the archbishop?" Instantly came the answer, "Reginald, here; I am no traitor, but the archbishop and priest of God." With his white rochet, a cloak and hood thrown over his shoulders, the tall figure of Becket suddenly confronted the angry men-at-arms. A few bitter words passed. The knights seized the archbishop, and endeavoured to drag him from the church. Clinging to a pillar, he bitterly reproached Fitzurse. There was a momentary struggle, and Fitzurse was thrown to the ground. The murderers then fell on the archbishop. One of the three who remained with Becket, Edward Grim, a Saxon monk of Cambridge, who was staying with him as a visitor for a few days, received a severe wound as he tried to ward off the deadly blows aimed at the dauntless prelate. When Becket felt himself wounded, wiping the blood from his face, he murmured, "Into thy hands, Lord, I commend my spirit." At the third blow he sank on his knees, with his face turned towards the altar of St. Benedict. Edward Grim, who was close by him all the while, in after days recalled the words of the dying archbishop—"For the name of Jesus and the defence of the church I am willing to die." Without moving hand or foot, he fell on his face as he spoke, and with such dignity that the long cloak which he wore was not disarranged.

While thus lying, probably already losing consciousness, Richard le Breton

struck a tremendous blow at the archbishop as he lay on the pavement, and the scalp or crown of the head was severed from the skull, and the sword snapped in two on the marble pavement. Another murderer—his name has been preserved—Hugh de Horsea, planted his foot on the neck of the corpse, thrust his sword into the ghastly wound, and scattered the brains over the pavement; then exclaimed, "Let us go; let us go. The traitor is dead. He will rise no more!" This was the end. Only one of the four knights had struck no blow. Hugh de Moreville had contented himself with keeping back at the entrance to the transept the crowds who were pouring in through the nave. The murderers at once rushed out of the church through the cloisters.

WATCHING THE CORPSE OF BECKET AFTER THE MURDER.

Two very different stories have been

preserved of their conduct after the dread deed had been accomplished. The story of the monks of Canterbury relates how, with a savage burst of triumph, they burst into the palace, ransacking the archbishop's chamber, opening his coffers, and carrying off many of his private papers and some of his valuables, his gold and silver plate, and beautiful church vestments. Such plundering work, if it took place at all, was most probably the deed of the men-at-arms who accompanied the four conspirators. But Tracy, one of the four, told a very different story long afterwards in a confession made to the bishop of Exeter. When the fell deed was done, he said, their spirits failed them, and they retired at once with trembling steps, expecting the earth to open and swallow them up. Both stories may be accurate. It is probable that Tracy told the truth, and that a sudden revulsion of feeling seized the four guilty knights when the murdered corpse of their victim lay before them, all bloody, in the solemn twilight of his great church; and that, appalled at their awful wickedness, they slunk away dismayed and awestruck, while their savage soldiers, taking advantage of the confusion, forced their way into the archbishop's house and plundered it. It is scarcely likely that men of the rank of the four would care for the vulgar plunder of the gold and silver and the broidered vestments.

Photo: Cassell & Co., Ltd.

PLACE OF BECKET'S MARTYRDOM, CANTERBURY.

The darkened cathedral was gradually cleared of the people who had rushed in singly as curious spectators, and for a brief season all was still, and the body of the murdered archbishop for a short time lay deserted on the blood-stained marble pavement of the transept of "the Martyrdom." But soon the terrified monks crept back. Osbert, the chamberlain of the archbishop, entering with a light, found the corpse still bleeding on the spot where the last savage blow had been dealt. A sorrowing group followed, and stood round the spot. The poor body was tenderly lifted, and turned with the face upwards. Strange to say, no mark of violence disfigured the well-known features. A smile seemed to play on the lips, and the eyes were closed as though in sleep. Only one faint streak of blood crossed the face of the dead. Carefully covering the gaping

PILGRIM'S BADGE IN THE FORM OF A SCALLOP SHELL. (*Guildhall Museum.*)

wound in the head, the monks carried the body from the transept to the choir, and there, in front of the high altar, with vessels placed round it to catch the drops of blood oozing from the gash, weeping, they watched by it through that sad winter night.

As the slow hours passed on, the watchers forgot the many faults, the passionate temper, the vengeful, unforgiving nature of their dead master. The heroic death of the great priest in his own lordly cathedral had for ever drawn a veil over these things; and when one of the faithful three who stood by him in the last awful moments, the aged Robert, canon of Merton, who had in old days been a tutor of Becket, lifting up the priestly garments, which still clothed the corpse, showed beneath the rough monk's robe and the haircloth shirt worn next to the skin, the weeping monks fell on their knees, and, kissing the hands and feet of the corpse, saluted him as Saint Thomas. Nor, in the state of exaltation of the monk-watchers, is the first of the many marvels which tradition has preserved to us as accompanying the martyrdom of the archbishop, difficult to account for. As the first streaks of the grey winter morning broke through the jewelled windows of the choir, as it was called, of Conrad, the watchers saw the right arm of the dead man slowly raised to the sign of the Cross, as if to bless his faithful followers.

Early in the morning the preciousness of the blood of the sainted Becket occurred to the monks. Every vestige of the blood and brains was carefully collected from the floor of the transept which had been the scene of the bloody deed. "The blood was mixed with water, which, endlessly diluted, was kept in innumerable vials to be distributed to the pilgrims who soon began to flock to the scene of the martyrdom; and, in the same manner as a palm was a sign of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and a scallop shell of the pilgrimage to Compostella, so a leaden vial or bottle with the 'diluted' blood became for ages the mark of a pilgrimage to Canterbury." *

But we anticipate the course of events. There were many fierce enemies still of the murdered man. So it was determined to bury the corpse—at all events for a season—in the privacy of the dark and solemn crypt beneath the vast church.

LEADEN VIALS IN THE FORM OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL, WORN BY PILGRIMS. (*Guildhall Museum.*)

* Dean Stanley: "Memorials of Canterbury."

Tenderly his friends removed the clothing of the dead man. The garments which he wore were many and various. He seems

BADGES WORN BY PILGRIMS TO THE SHRINE OF THOMAS À BECKET, KNOWN AS "CAPITA THOMÆ." (*Guildhall Museum.*)

ever to have suffered from chilliness. A large brown cloak with white wool fringes covered all. Below this he wore a surplice over a white fur garment of lambswool; next were two short woollen pelisses, and under this mass of clothing was the black cowled robe of the Benedictines. Next his skin the archbishop wore a haircloth of peculiar roughness; this haircloth,

"CAPITA THOMÆ." (*Guildhall Museum.*)

which encased his whole body, being covered with linen, that no one might suspect the extreme austerity of his habitual practices. The whole was so fitted as to be easily taken off, for daily Becket seems to have submitted to a cruel scourging. When all the stern austerity of this strange man had been disclosed to the amazed and awe-stricken bystanders, it was seen that the haircloth, which touched the body, all marked with the stripes of a recent scourging, was literally covered with vermin. The monks burst into tears at the dreadful sight, exclaiming, "See! see what a true monk he was, and we knew it not!" Reverently they replaced these insignia of what the fashion of the times regarded as belonging to a true saint of God, and over them they placed the elaborate and beautiful vestments belonging to his archiepiscopal dignity, including altar stole and maniple, tunic, dalmatic, chasuble, gloves, rings, and sandals. They laid in his hand his pastoral staff, and hung over his shoulders the sacred pall he had received from Rome, a new marble sarcophagus which stood in the crypt being used for his coffin.

For nearly a year in the cathedral no bell was rung, the many crucifixes veiled, the altars were stripped, and the services, without chanting, were said in the adjoining chapter-house. The ceremony of re-consecration of the desecrated church was eventually performed by the bishops of Exeter and Chester. Within three years of the martyrdom the highest honours were authorised by the Pope, and the martyr Becket was henceforth formally invoked as a saint by the Catholic church, and the 29th of December was regularly set apart as the Feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

The assassination of Becket was indeed appalling. He was, without doubt, in his day the most distinguished churchman in Christendom, the acknowledged champion of the powerful sacerdotal order, the years-long implacable adversary of the greatest king in Europe; and in the moment of his triumph over his opponent, this famous ecclesiastic, a man of the highest rank, of most saintly holiness, was foully and cruelly murdered in his own cathedral. The horror of the murder ran throughout Christendom. For centuries he was the most popular saint in England; but far beyond England was his memory cherished. Other English saints, however great their local fame, for the most part have been scarcely known beyond the seas which girdle our island. No churches on the continent of Europe are called after Cuthbert of Durham, or after Edward, the martyr-king of East Anglia. But there is no country in Europe where traces of the cult of Becket cannot be found. We may instance in very different nationalities where his memory has been honoured: Rome, Verona, Florence, Lisbon, and Palermo. In France memorials are numerous in all parts—in the north at Douai, Lille, and St. Omer; in the south we find them in Lyons. In the gorgeous windows of Chartres are seen the story of his life over the seas. Even in distant Sicily, in the stately church of Monreale, the figure of the great Englishman found a place.

PENANCE OF HENRY II. AT BECKET'S TOMB.

But the centre of all this posthumous

fame was naturally at Canterbury. For three centuries the long succession of pilgrimages placed the cathedral church of Canterbury among the chief resorts of Christendom. Thither wandered to pray and to meditate all sorts and conditions of men of every country of Europe, from the crowned head down to the humblest child of the people, all longing to pour out the desires of their hearts, their sorrows and their joys, or to gain relief from their bodily sufferings, at the shrine of the English martyr; all hoping to gain some relief from sickness or from sorrow through the powerful intercession at the throne of grace of him who on that sad December night in 1170, in his own proud cathedral church of Canterbury, after a noble witness, had fallen asleep.

Quickly the news of the archbishop's murder was carried across the sea to Henry Plantagenet. When the king heard it he shut himself up for three days, refusing all food except milk and almonds, clad himself in sackcloth, and called God to witness that he was in no way responsible for the archbishop's death. Henry was heard again and again to exclaim: "Alas! alas! that it ever happened." So poignant, indeed, was his grief, that his attendants began to fear for his life. Nor is there the least reason to suspect that this bitter sorrow and remorse was in any way feigned. Mingled with dread as to the consequences of the terrible act were, no doubt, many memories of his old and intimate association with the great man who had just been so cruelly done to death at Canterbury.

In Rome the news of the famous churchman's murder was received with horror and burning indignation. Indeed, on the Continent generally the disposition at first was to regard Henry Plantagenet as the real author of the crime. Excommunication and interdict would have certainly followed had not king Henry, in the most solemn terms, purged himself of all complicity in the dread act; had he not expressed his deepest grief at what had happened, and offered the fullest reparation possible to the church for the deed. He undertook in person, should the Pope require it, to lead a crusade of expiation to the Holy Land; and what was of more practical importance, he abrogated the Statutes of Clarendon, the original source of his quarrel with the martyred Becket.

As a reward for his genuine penitence and practical acts of reparation and expiation, the king of England eventually was formally reconciled to the church in Avranches cathedral, by legates of the highest rank specially commissioned for the purpose by the holy see. But the king was not yet done with the results of this terrible Canterbury murder. In a little more than three years after the bloody deed, Henry Plantagenet, as the humblest of penitents, knelt at his old friend's tomb. The fame of Becket was now in all the lands of Christendom, and pilgrims from far and near had begun already to visit the place of his sepulture and the scene of his martyrdom, and even to ask for his prayers. But a dark shadow had fallen upon the king of England's fortunes. Disaster and calamity threatened him, and, worse than all, home troubles poisoned his whole life. His wife was his enemy, and the sons whom he loved too well were in open rebellion. Men believed

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

FROM THE NORTH WEST.
PHOTO: J. G. CHARLTON, CANTERBURY.

—and probably the king himself partly shared in the popular belief—that a curse rested on him for his bitter persecution, if not for the actual murder of the saint whose holy body lay in the dark crypt at Canterbury. He would win his pardon by a great public act of reparation and expiation at his old friend's tomb, and so remove the curse which lay heavy upon his royal house.

So the king determined upon the strangest pilgrimage which perhaps history records. It was in the month of July of the year 1174 that the great Plantagenet came to Canterbury. As soon as he came in sight of the cathedral towers the king, dismounting from his horse, with bare and bleeding feet walked along the rough and stony road to the great church where Becket rested. He threw himself in an agony of prayer before the saint's tomb, while Gilbert Foliot, bishop of London, once the archbishop's determined enemy, preached to the wondering crowd, and in his passionate sermon explaining the motives of the royal pilgrim, assured the listeners that Henry on his solemn oath was guiltless of the murder; but as his hasty words had been the cause of the awful crime, he desired to submit himself to the penance of the church. Then proceeded that savage act of punishment voluntarily submitted to by the most powerful sovereign in Europe. As Henry knelt before Becket's tomb, each of the monks, then eighty in number, with a rod in his hand thrice struck the naked shoulders of the king. At last, when the cruel punishment was over, Henry Plantagenet resumed his robes, and tarried all night with bare feet, fasting and praying, in the cold crypt by Becket's tomb.

This deep humiliation of the mighty king at the tomb of Becket, ranks in history with the great submissions of the Christian world; with the humiliation of the emperor Theodosius before Ambrose, and of the emperor Henry IV. at the feet of Pope Gregory VII. at Canossa. The result was naturally a grave attack of illness; but while the king lay sick, came to him the news of the triumph of his army, and the captivity of his enemy the rebel king of the Scots. This was assumed to signify that the great sin was blotted out, and that the outraged and murdered saint had forgiven his old friend and master.

Becket was murdered in the year 1170. In the reaction which followed the great tragedy, we have noticed that king Henry had renounced the Constitutions of Clarendon. But six years later, in the assize of Northampton (1176), with the consent, singularly enough, of the Papal legate (the constant presence of a great Roman official in England, unchallenged and indeed apparently welcomed, marks the gradual but enormous strides which Rome was taking towards universal supremacy), the judicial legislation of the assize of Clarendon was perfected. "Thinking more of the king than of his chief, the legate admitted king Henry's right to bring the clergy before secular courts for various crimes," and religious churchmen looked on with helpless irritation at the king's first formal victory over the principles of Thomas. "In the view of his own day he had renewed the assize of Clarendon, and ordered to be

observed the execrable decrees for which the blessed martyr Thomas had borne exile for seven years, and had been crowned with the crown of martyrdom." * And thus the wise legislation of Henry II. succeeded in the end in effecting those salutary changes in ecclesiastical procedure and custom, which in the first half of his reign had been so resolutely, and for a time so successfully, opposed. His later laws prevented the church from interfering in secular matters, save in the case of marriages and wills.

An impartial historian, however, cannot charge Henry with ill-will to the church. He never desired to quarrel with the ecclesiastical authority, or to deprive the priesthood in England of its deservedly powerful influence. He was too great and too far-seeing a sovereign to wish to lessen the real and legitimate power of the clergy, which he knew to be the best safeguard against general lawlessness, and the high-handed and often cruel misrule of the great barons. He was also fully conscious of the general and efficient support they had given him in the many and dangerous attempts which had been made to subvert his rule. To the last he looked on the clergy as his best advisers and supporters, and for his part he steadily preserved them from unjust burdens and public exactions. In the king's private life, evil and reprehensible though it often was, many and frequent were his acts of devotion; fitful it is true, but still by their conspicuous nature demonstrating his respect for the church and its ordinances.

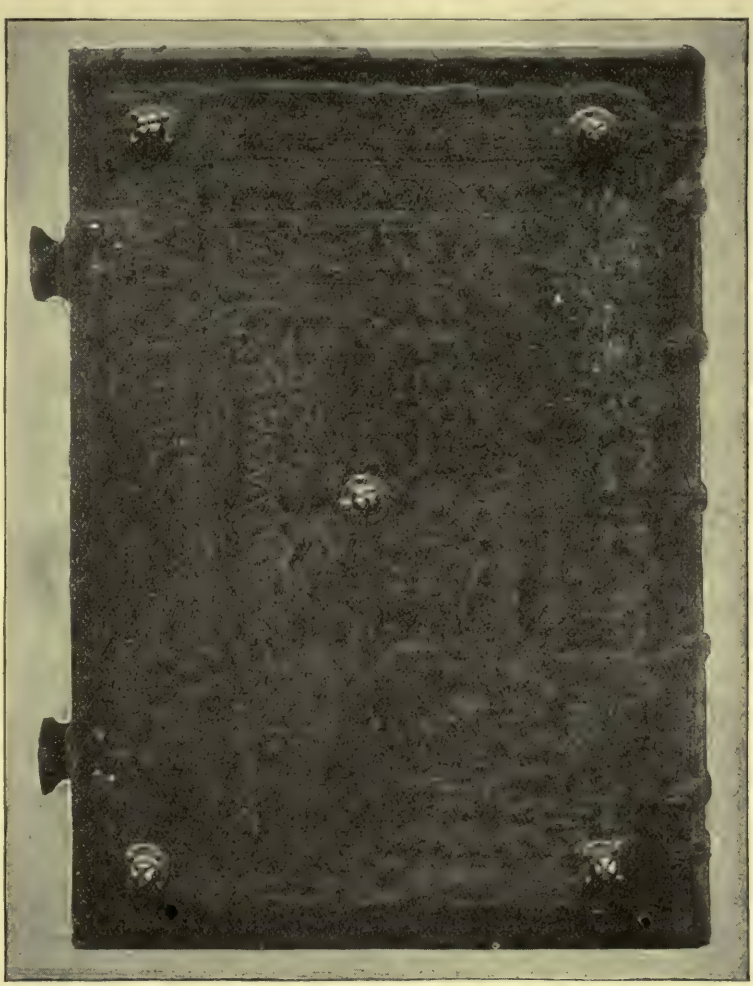
The chief complaints of the clergy against the great Plantagenet were caused by their preference of the immunities of their class to the common safeguard of justice. But here the verdict of posterity, including the unanimous voice of fair-minded churchmen, will unhesitatingly be given on the side of Henry. Still, it can never be said that Becket died in vain; the spectacle of such a death crowning his life of struggle, noble if mistaken, in a way perhaps no other recorded death of a mortal had ever done, went home to the hearts of an entire people, and raised in an extraordinary degree the public estimation of the order to which Becket belonged, and for which Becket had died. Nor was this new and loftier estimate of the ecclesiastical order, which could produce so popular a hero, confined to the generation which witnessed the martyrdom. The tradition was handed on from father to son, and a long period in the story of England had to run out before the memory of the death of Becket can be said to have been effaced from the hearts of the English people.

The reign of Henry Plantagenet marked a great revival of literature in England—a revival in which, as usual, the Church of England bore the chief part. The troubles and confusion which followed the Norman Conquest were, of course, fatal for a time to any serious cultivation of learning. But when Henry II. became undisputed king, a century had well-nigh elapsed since the day of Hastings; the troubles and heart-burnings of the first days of the Norman occupation were partly at least forgotten, and things had become quieter under his strong and wise rule.

The church and churchmen, naturally,

* Mrs. J. R. Green: "Henry II."

took the lead in the work, under the patronage and direct protection of the king. Henry II. had been himself well taught in his youth, and, as far as his busy life permitted, cultivated letters, and delighted in the society of scholars and men of erudition. His court was ever open to such men, who, finding there a ready welcome, naturally flocked to such a powerful patron; and through his long reign his residence was a centre and a resort for scholars and writers. But the more solid work in literature was done in the great cathedral schools, and in the scriptoria, or writing cells and rooms of the more important monasteries. Among the cathedrals whose schools were prominent were Canterbury, York, and Lincoln, while in



BOOK-COVER OF THE LIBER HUGONIS EPISCOPI, A MAGNIFICENT BIBLE GIVEN BY BISHOP HUGH PUDSEY, NEPHEW OF KING STEPHEN, TO THE MONASTERY AT DURHAM, NOW IN THE LIBRARY OF THE CATHEDRAL (12TH CENTURY).

this reign, to use the words of one of our greatest historical scholars, "we see a great development of university life, if not the very origin of university life itself, at Oxford." Before the death of Henry II. there was certainly a university at Oxford, with doctors and masters and even public lectures.

Speaking of this reign, the historian who has made this period peculiarly his own, says: "Nothing is more curious than the lively historic activity going on in the monasteries. MSS. are copied, luxurious editions are re-copied and illuminated; there is no lack of generosity in lending, or of boldness in borrowing; there is a brisk competition and liberal, open rivalry. St. Albans is especially rich in the collected materials that lie at the foundation of her great code of Chronicles. At Peterborough, abbot Benedict is equally busy, directing transcriptions, and compiling or editing his own recollections of St. Thomas (Becket); but every little monastery has its record. Crowland is thinking of hiring Peter of Blois, to fabricate for her an apocryphal chronicle; at Ramsey there is an invaluable chronicle kept, going back into the old Egbert times, and there is the same at Ely, conducted by a succession of learned and patriotic monks. Coming to Lincoln, there is Walter Map, with his poems and stories about the courtiers, acting as archdeacon or precentor; the wise St. Hugh himself, the bishop, has stories to tell at the high table in the hall, and admiring disciples anxious to gather up every word that falls from his lips. Roger of Hoveden, rector of Howden in Yorkshire, is quite Herodotean, both in the faithfulness of his personal relations, and in the wish to incorporate in his chronicle all that he can gather touching the geography and history of strange lands. . . . If the visitor can be prevailed on to go so far north as Hexham, he may even reach Melrose, and there watch the process of annal making, and come home by Durham. There he will find a magnificent court under bishop Hugh, the great prince-prelate of the period, and in his train poets, preachers, and writers of histories, who are one after another continuing the work which had been begun by Bede, and continued after long breaks by Simeon and the Hexham writers. And so, after having completely traversed the literary world (of Henry II.), he may come south, through either the eastern or the western counties, sure to find at every monastery or cathedral he may visit some one employed in keeping up the record of public as well as of local history, or otherwise attempting to keep alive the fire of literary zeal." *

Latin, the language of learning and of public worship, seems to have been a favourite tongue among these scholarly and often accomplished monks and clerks; but a demand was springing up in England in the last half of the twelfth century for a *popular* literature, which could be understood by the unlearned baron or citizen. Virgil, Statius, and Ovid were translated into Norman-French. Wace, the canon of Bayeux, one of the favourite scholars of king Henry's court, dedicated to Henry's queen Eleanor his translation of the history of Geoffrey of Monmouth, which was one of the sources of the first English important poem, Layamon's "Brut." Somewhat

* Bishop Stubbs: "Oxford Lectures," vii. The Court of Henry II.

later, the same ecclesiastic, Wace, in honour of Henry, told in Norman-French his famous "Roman de Rou," the story of the Plantagenet's Norman ancestors. Other Norman-French poems were written, such as on the life of the martyred Thomas Becket; and thus an Anglo-Norman literature of song and of theology grew up in our England in the days when Henry II. was king.

But as yet *English*, the speech of the common folk, still lived on as a tongue apart, far removed from courtiers and men of letters; a vernacular literature was still a thing of the future. There were English songs in those days sung by homely minstrels in fair and market-place; but these, alas! are lost irrevocably—they have left no echo behind them. The antiquary and the historian searches for these national lilts, but searches in vain.

The story of the remaining years of Henry II., with its brilliant successes, its bitter disappointments, its ceaseless wars and intrigues, interesting though it be, is outside our work. The unbridled passions, the wild excesses, the evil private example of the great king, received their punishment on earth. Nowhere in the whole course of history was the truth of those solemn words, *the wages of sin is death*, more piteously exemplified than in the last days of this man, one of the greatest of our English kings. The far-seeing and beneficent legislator for church and state, the illustrious soldier, the wise administrator, but whose heart was not right before God, closed his brilliant career in clouds and thick darkness. The end came with startling suddenness in the year 1189. Henry was preparing for a Crusade on a grand scale. In the eyes of the world, at this period, the Plantagenet was the most renowned of the kings of the earth. For forty years, on the whole, his reign had been one long triumph. He was at peace with the church, and no open enemy seriously menaced his broad, far-reaching dominions. But the eyes of the world were deceived. The king at this juncture stood solitary and friendless. His wife was away, guarded as a prisoner. Two of his well-loved sons, for whom he had sacrificed much, had died traitors to their father. A third son, Richard, afterwards known as Cœur-de-Lion, was in open rebellion against his authority. One child, John, remained with him, his best-beloved; and he too, though Henry knew it not, was a traitor also.

The king was only fifty-six, but forty years of ceaseless cares and anxieties had prematurely aged him, and completely sapped his great strength. A number of vexations at this juncture contributed to harass him. Philip Augustus of France, who had succeeded his life-long foe Louis VII., and his rebel son Richard, took up arms against him. The king's own forces with him at that moment in Anjou, were quite insufficient to cope with his enemies. Hastily he sent to England for reinforcements, but they were too late. Henry, excited, and in considerable personal danger from his enemies pressing round him, fell sick of a fever. He wished for peace; but the French king's terms were heavy and exacting. We catch sight of the sick man, with clouded brain, suffering and weak, hastily concluding a peace ignominious in the highest degree to so great and

powerful a sovereign—a peace he would never have dreamed of agreeing to in the days of his health and strength; and we hear the sick monarch's fierce whisper to his faithless son Richard, who, with the French king, met Henry to settle the terms of this unhappy peace: "May God not let me die till I have avenged myself on thee."

They carried Henry Plantagenet in a litter to the castle of Chinon. There he grew rapidly worse. While tortured with suffering and weak with the burning fever, the list of those who had been concerned in the late disastrous intrigues was brought him. In the fatal catalogue of names he read the name of his best beloved son, prince John. This was the last blow; from it he never rallied. "John!" he was heard to say, "my very heart has forsaken me!" And then he became delirious. In the intervals of his wild ravings, the men who stood by the bed of the dying king heard him cursing the day on which he was born; and at intervals invoking Heaven's vengeance on his faithless sons. Only one of these stood by him lovingly to the end—the illegitimate Geoffrey, and he soothed as best he could the dying hours of the great Plantagenet. It was a sad close to a reign of almost unparalleled glory and success, the fame of which had filled the world for so many years, all to end "in the cruel desertion, the baffled rage, the futile curses of the chained leopard in the castle of Chinon. The lawful sons—the offspring, the victims, and the avengers of a heartless policy—the loveless children of a loveless mother, had left the last duties of an affection they did not feel, to the hands of a bastard, the child of an early, obscure, misplaced, degrading, but not a mercenary love."*

Photo: Daveau, Rouen.

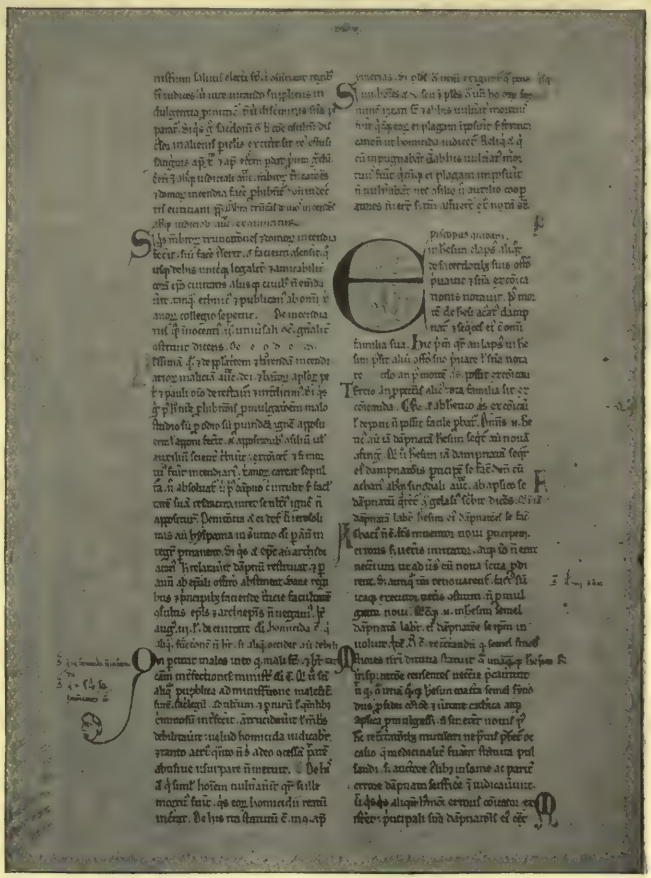
EFFIGY OF HENRY II. AT FONTEVRAUD.

He was laid with all reverence in the abbey of Fontevraud, where the original effigy of the great Plantagenet, though the tomb has been destroyed and the effigy

* Bishop Stubbs: Preface to "Chronicle of Benedict of Peterborough."

somewhat defaced, still remains. The face of Henry is clean-shaven. The body is vested in two tunics and crimson dalmatic, with a mantle of chocolate colour. The feet are encased in rich buskins of green, with spurs of gold. The original crown is broken, but the right hand still grasps the sceptre of his many realms.

England will ever recognise him, with all his faults and sins, as one of her great legislators; as one of the foremost on the splendid roll of the makers of her greatness. It was thanks to his foresight and perseverance, that the Church of England never passed under the rule of Roman canon law. From the twelfth century to the present day, the groundwork of our law in church and state has been English, not Roman. The legislative work of Henry II. in church and state has been enduring.



PAGE FROM AN ABRIDGMENT OF GRATIAN'S "CONCORDANTIA DISCORDANTIUM CANONUM"—A MANUAL OF CANON LAW ABOUT A.D. 1200. (*British Museum.*)

Several references have been made in the course of the above narrative to this "canon law" and "Roman law." Without attempting anything even of the nature of a formal sketch of the history of canon law, a few notes on this difficult and abstruse subject may be serviceable to the student of English church history, who must constantly come upon mentions of the law and the customs which have guided the clergy in their dealings with their own order, as well as with the laity. Canon law, as it existed in the reign of Henry II. and his sons (1154–1216), was, roughly speaking, based upon—

1. A compilation of penitentials.
2. A collection of canons of councils.
3. The great body of Roman civil law of the emperor Justinian.

Of these, the *Penitentials* were private compilations of scholars and divines of different ages, the authority of which depended on the estimation or dignity of their authors; but these compilations were of the highest importance. They were "rules of penance," specifying usually special sins and their penances; and they may be said generally to incorporate the rules on which early episcopal jurisdiction proceeded. The *canons of councils* were the authorised church law. Of these, there was a series of important collections; and as councils were continually held, this collection gradually increased. The great body of *Roman civil law* had been arranged by the emperor Justinian in the sixth century—of course, largely based on the ancient laws and customs of the Roman empire. These three bases of canon law overlapped each other everywhere, and contained much common matter.

In the sixth century, Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman abbot, first compiled a collection of "Canons," which became the germ and model of all later collections. Nearly at the same time John the Faster made a compilation of "Penitentials" in the Eastern Church; and in the West, under the Irish and Celtic missionaries, a similar compilation of "Penitentials" began. Passing on to the eleventh century—the great era when the reformation of the Papacy and the great revival of monasticism took place—Burchard of Worms got together and arranged systematically all the materials he could find, borrowing authoritative determinations from the "Penitentials," the "Canons of Councils," "Articles of the Roman Civil Law," as known to him by the Theodosian (Roman) code, and certain of the "Capitularies of the Emperors," bearing on church discipline and customs. A century later Ivo of Chartres, a contemporary of Henry I., produced the "Pannormia," a similar collection improved on that of Burchard by the use of the digest and code of Justinian.

Bologna and Pavia were the great schools where all this elaborate system of canon law was studied—a system which was ever becoming more complicated, as the accumulation of materials was always going on; and to these Italian universities proceeded from different countries those ecclesiastics who desired to become proficients in this great and important study. It will thus be seen that a *Roman* colouring was spread over all this great system of ecclesiastical or church law, and that naturally men would come to look to Rome, its bishop and his courts, as the central and supreme court of appeal. Largely based as was the whole system on Roman law, it carried the Roman procedure as a part of church administration.

In England, before the Norman Conquest, a different system from that adopted on the continent of Europe prevailed. There are very few traces under the Anglo-Saxon kings of Roman and foreign influences. Kings such as Alfred, Egbert, Ethelred, and Canute, with the advice and close co-operation of the bishops of the realm, made ecclesiastical laws, which clothed the spiritual enactments with coercive authority. "Penitentials," such as the famous one put out by archbishop Theodore, were no doubt largely used in the administration of justice in the Anglo-Saxon courts. But these courts, which dealt with all offences touching the clergy

except those of a purely spiritual character, were the ordinary gemots or assemblies of the hundred or the shire; there the bishops and their assessors, archdeacons and deans, sat with the sheriffs and other public officers of high rank.

After the Norman Conquest, as we have seen, king William separated the church judicature from its association with the popular judicature, substituting for Anglo-Saxon bishops foreign prelates learned in the Roman procedure. This was the first step, and a very important one, towards the attempted introduction into England of mediæval canon law. Time went on; some eighty years after the Norman Conquest, Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, the first patron of Becket (1139 to 1161), made another important advance in the same direction. It was Theobald who brought from Lombardy, and settled at Oxford as a teacher, Vacarius, a famous learned canonist, and encouraged a stream of young archdeacons to leave England for a season for the purpose of studying in the Italian canon-law schools of Pavia and Bologna, with a view to their equipment for their judicial duties in the English ecclesiastical courts.

Then may be said to have begun that great increase of *appeals to Rome*, which seriously disturbed the English advisers of Henry II.; then, too, the new doctrines and claims to ecclesiastical independence of canon lawyers became more and more disturbing to the old and intimate English relations between church and state. In putting out the "Constitutions of Clarendon," which so largely limited the powers of ecclesiastical lawyers in criminal matters and in all points touching secular interests, Henry Plantagenet had with him, it is plain, the heart of England, and that not only of the lay folk. In the deadly quarrel with Becket, it is clear that many of the leading ecclesiastics were on Henry's side, and never gave but a half-hearted support to Becket's views. These men were English and patriots first, and misliked the growing subjection to Rome.

Thus it came to pass that after Becket's death, partly in the "Northampton assize" in 1176, partly in Constitutions of which we do not possess any record, Henry Plantagenet succeeded in restraining the ecclesiastical judicature from interfering in secular matters, except in the two points of matrimony and of testamentary business. As we shall further see, from the days of Henry II. onward the opposition to any introduction of Roman canon law remained deeply rooted in our country, while dislike, and even hatred of foreign interference served as a partial bulwark against the ever-advancing pretensions of Rome. The dislike grew as the Middle Ages advanced, and in the end was perhaps the most powerful agent in bringing about the Reformation under Henry VIII.

On the continent of Europe, the material out of which Roman canon law was composed, since the days of Henry II. and his sons was largely increased by the accretion of authoritative sentences of successive Popes of Rome. The well-known "Extravagants" are made up of these authoritative Papal sentences which were not yet codified.*

* See generally, Bishop Stubbs' Oxford Lectures on "Mediæval and Modern History" XIII. and XIV., and Stubbs' "Select Charters" Part IV. (Henry II.); on which the above little study is largely based.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE RENAISSANCE OF MONASTICISM.

Degradation of the Church in the Tenth Century—Monastic Revival at Cluny—Its Influence on the Popes—Camaldoli and Vallombrosa—Foundation of the Carthusian Order—Various Lesser Orders—The great Cistercian Order—Its Characteristics—Introduction into England—Bernard of Clairvaux—Intimate Connection with the Knight Templars—Doctrinal Teaching of St. Bernard—His Hymns still Sung in the Churches—His Personality—Growth of the Cistercian Order in England—Vast Increase of Monasteries Generally—Their great Influence as Teachers of Labour and Promoters of Trade—Classified Summary of the Religious Orders of the Thirteenth Century.

DURING the later years of the Conqueror, the reigns of Rufus and Beauclerc, and the long anarchy of Stephen, and also during the more settled but still disturbed period of Henry II., a troubled and anxious period, stretching over about a hundred years, much of the inner life of the Church of England, and much of its influence among the people, must be sought for in *the religious houses*. Of these, an enormous number were founded in this period, mostly belonging to the Benedictine and Cistercian orders. It will be well first, however, to give a very brief sketch of the sudden and vast increase of these houses on the Continent, whence it was that they spread over England with such extraordinary rapidity, largely influencing all the religious work of the Church of England for several centuries.

Nothing in the history of Christianity is perhaps so remarkable as the "renaissance" of religious life in the middle of the eleventh century. From various causes, some of which we have dwelt upon in the foregoing chapters, on the continent of Europe all true and noble religious life, save in a few rare centres, was well-nigh extinguished during the tenth century. The story of the two hundred years which followed the death of Charlemagne, is the saddest portion of all the annals of the Christian era. The Saracens in the southern districts of Europe, the Northmen in the northern, western, and even central countries, the Hungarians in the east, had desolated the fairest portion of the western world; and as the terrible invasion gradually came to an end, and these savage invaders subsided by slow degrees into stationary life, it seemed as though Europe was passing back into barbarism. Even population was alarmingly diminished. Michelet's words descriptive of his own country were too true of other lands: "Herds of deer seemed to have taken possession of France." "In that dreary age," writes another historian, "no one thought of common defence or wide organisation. The strong built castles; the weak became their bondsmen, or took shelter under the cowl."*

As the second of these two awful centuries drew to an end, and the terrible pagan invasion gradually ceased, the

* Bryce: "The Holy Roman Empire."

Christian church on the continent of Europe seemed powerless to effect any practical influence. The sad picture of the most prominent of the Christian

Photo: Braun, Paris.

ST. BRUNO CONFERRING THE CARTHUSIAN HABIT.

(From the picture by Eustache Le Sueur in the Louvre.)

reformation of morals. The example it was itself setting, prevented it effectually from exercising any really beneficial or churches, the one which claimed a pre-eminence and asserted its right to direct—Rome—has been already painted; but no

picture can adequately represent the awful degradation of Rome in the centuries which followed Charlemagne's death. And the example of Rome was too faithfully followed in other great centres of western Christendom. Very many of the monasteries were degraded: they were houses of sloth, and too often of drunkenness and profligacy. The great churches utterly failed in their duties, either as instructors, monitors, or comforters. What, indeed, could be expected from the lesser and poorer houses of prayer, when important bishoprics were bestowed by such men as Hugh of Provence, famous for his crimes, upon bastard sons; when worldly barons conferred abbeys and bishoprics on their infant children? For instance, a child only five years old was made archbishop of the once great see of Rheims. We read of another boy of ten, for whom the bishopric of Narbonne was purchased. Churches and their lands were bequeathed to daughters as their dowries. Simony in its most degraded form was a general curse in western Christendom. The foul disorder was general when Hildebrand, afterwards the great Pope Gregory VII., was made director of the illustrious monastery of St. Paul at Rome. He found cattle stabled in the noble basilica over which he was placed, and the monks of the house were waited on in the refectory by abandoned women!

In the eleventh century, however, a great and startling reformation in the church set in, and very soon its blessed influence was felt in the disorganised and wretched society of that most unhappy age. As early as the year 909 the general corruption in the church and society was deplored in the council of Trosley. But the first real sign of longing after a better and a nobler life appeared in the monastic life, so sadly desecrated. The subsequently world-famed monastery of Cluny, of which some account has already been given, will ever possess this title to honour in the church, that it was within its walls that apparently the first genuine efforts after a reformation were made, and that to it largely belongs the honour of having trained and inspired the great Popes who rescued the bishopric of Rome from its long and fatal degeneration.

Through the tenth century, amidst all its corruptions and degradations, the example set by Cluny slowly made its way, and early in the following century (the eleventh) an extraordinary zeal for true monasticism sprang up in various countries on the continent of Europe. In Italy, a nobleman named Romuald in the year 1018 founded the society of Camaldoli in the Apennines, with a rule of stern severity. In 1039 Gualbert, a noble Florentine, established a new order, with a system of great rigour, at Vallombrosa. A marked reform was also carried out in this century in the numerous Benedictine houses; while the regeneration of the Papacy, under a succession of saintly and vigorous Popes, after the year 1048 gave a general impetus to this extraordinary movement throughout the church.

Several new societies, which in the coming years played a prominent part in the Christianity of the west, came into being in the latter years of this same eleventh and in the earlier years of the twelfth century. The earliest of these received the Papal sanction in 1074, and

was founded by Stephen, son of a count of Thiers, in Auvergne; it derived its name from "Grammont" (*grandis mons—grande Montagne*), near Limoges, whither the brethren removed directly after the founder's death. The terrible austerity of the *Grandimontan* monks prevented it, however, from obtaining a wide popularity.

The year 1084 witnessed the establishment of the Grande Chartreuse, near Grenoble—an order which, under the name of *Carthusian*, obtained a world-wide celebrity, and played eventually no small part in the monastic life in England. In the drama of the Reformation in England in the sixteenth century, the stern resistance of the Carthusians to the harsh measures of Henry VIII. was one of the notable features of that age of indiscriminate destruction. The Carthusian, with the stern, austere life by which he witnessed against the corruption of the eleventh century, is with us still. The founder of this famous community was Bruno of Cologne, master of the cathedral school of Rheims, and one of the most illustrious of the great saints who under God restored the waning influence of Christianity in the last years of the eleventh century.

The order of *Fontevraud*, named after the mother-house in the diocese of Poitiers, dates from 1106. It included in its rigid rule both sexes. Singularly enough, by the arrangement of its founder Robert, famous for his preaching, the superintendence of the whole community was entrusted to a female superior; the precedent he alleged for this strange regulation was the charge of the Saviour on the Cross, when he commended St. John to the care of the blessed Virgin as His mother. The order increased rapidly, and it soon numbered, besides its monks, as many as four to five thousand nuns. It possessed houses in Spain and England as well as in France.

The *Præmonstratensians*, who derived their name from the mother-house of Prémontré in the diocese of Laon, were founded in 1119. The rigid life of the monk in this order was combined with the practical work of the priest. This community spread widely in many countries, and even possessed houses in Syria and Palestine during the period of the Crusades. They long preserved the severity of their rule, and eventually became a very wealthy order.

In this necessarily short sketch of the new orders which came into existence in the course of the great and sudden revival of religious life in Europe, we have deferred to the last, mention of that famous order which spread so rapidly and so widely in our own country—the *Cistercian*. Its genesis was as follows. In the last years of the eleventh century, when Rufus was king in England and Anselm was in exile, two brothers of the noble house of Molesme in the diocese of Langres, on their way to a tournament, were both tormented with the same evil suggestion: "What if I should murder my brother, and so secure the whole of our inheritance?" The fratricidal thought occupied their minds for some time. The brothers eventually told each other of what was in their hearts, and mutually resolved to abandon a world which abounded in such appalling suggestions; and then they founded together the religious house of Molesme, which soon acquired a reputation for sanctity and extreme severity of life and practice.

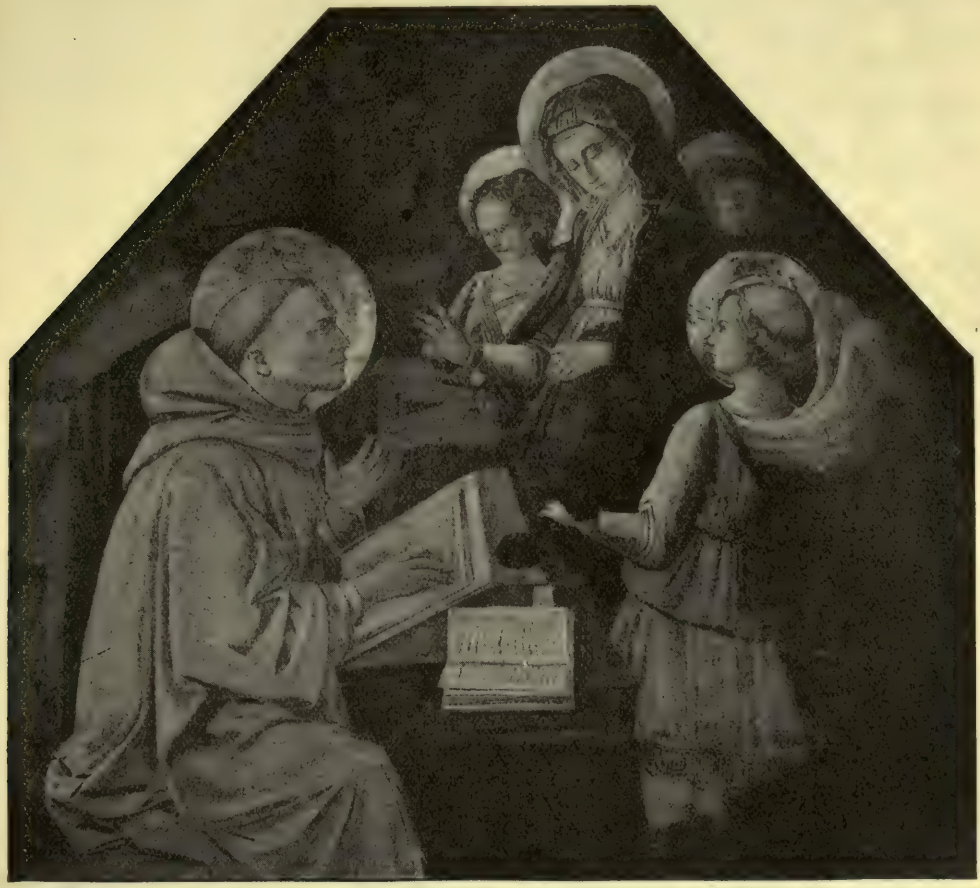
Thither in search of a haven of peace came Harding, an Englishman, trained in the monastery of Sherborne in Dorset. He assumed as a monk the name of Stephen.

In 1098 Stephen Harding and a few of the monks of Molesme left their monastery, and in the desolate and unattractive solitude of Citeaux (whence the name Cistercian), near Chalons, some twelve miles from the Burgundian capital of Dijon, founded a new house. Of this plain and undistinguished community Stephen Harding the Englishman became the third abbot in 1109. This Stephen put out a code, entitled the "Charter of Love," formally sanctioned by Pope Calixtus, to be observed by the brethren of Citeaux, who were already attracting the attention of the religious world. The next two or three years saw the foundation of several daughter houses by monks sent out from Citeaux.

There was something strangely attractive to religious minds in the charter or rule of Stephen Harding, the real founder of the great order of Citeaux, whose monks were known as Cistercians. They were to be Benedictines; but nobler, more spiritual, more austere Benedictines. Their dress was to be white, not black. This white habit was shown to them in a vision by the blessed Virgin Mary, who had constituted herself the special patroness of their order. This belief in the special protection of Mary not a little contributed to their marvellous popularity. Every monastery and Cistercian church was to be dedicated to her. Cities were to be avoided; desolate, lonely sites were alone to be chosen by the new brotherhood. Different from the monks of Cluny and the old Benedictine houses, the Cistercians were to aim at extreme simplicity of ritual. By them architecture was to be disregarded, as well as the kindred arts of painting, sculpture, and music; the very vestments used in their most solemn services were to be plain and unadorned, without gold and delicate embroidery. This Cistercian spirit, which aimed at perfect simplicity in their buildings, and which deprecated all special ornamentation, is well exemplified in a letter of their greatest and most famous abbot, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who writes in the following terms to William of St. Thiery: "What do you imagine is sought by these things? The contrition of the penitent or the wonder of beholders? O, vanity of vanities, and not more vain than foolish! The church glistens on all its walls, but the poor are not there. It clothes its stones with gold, but leaves the children to nakedness. At the expense of the needy it feasts the eyes of the rich. The curious find what pleases them, but the wretched find nothing to give them succour."

Very early in the history of the famous order the Cistercian made his appearance in England. The first settlement was at Waverly in Surrey. Among the more celebrated of the early-founded houses was Tintern, on the Wye, and Neath, even further west. In the north and midlands, however, the new order was most popular, and the exquisite ruins of Fountains and Rievaulx are still with us, to remind us of the coming of the disciples of Stephen Harding to raise and influence the spiritual life of England in the twelfth century.

." A new feature was thus added to the religious life of England. The older Benedictine houses had either been planted in cities [as in the case of the great Benedictine abbey of Gloucester], or else a town had grown up around the monastic precincts [as we see at Evesham or Bury St. Edmunds]. The Cistercians of set purpose lived in the wilderness, and for the most part pitched their dwellings in solitary spots of striking beauty [such as Tintern or Fountains]. Only a few of their many houses rose to any great wealth or to historic fame. But it is the Cistercian houses whose names live on the lips of men. The ruined abbey is more often a house of the Cistercian order than of any other. The Benedictine houses have commonly (as in the case of Evesham) either been wholly swept away, or else left in a more or less perfect state as cathedrals or parochial churches. The Cistercian



THE VISION OF ST. BERNARD.
(*From the picture by Fra Filippo Lippi in the National Gallery.*)

church, plain and stern in its architecture, often more beautiful in its decay than it could ever have been in its day of perfection, remains as a far more living witness of a state of things which has passed away, than those buildings which still survive to be applied to the uses of our own times."*

But what gave the Cistercian order its great impulse, and perhaps more than any cause was the occasion of its rapid growth and marvellous popularity, was its possession of Bernard of Clairvaux, without doubt the greatest monk in that age of monastic power and influence. Bernard was a youth of high birth, beautiful person, winning manners, irresistible influence over the hearts of all with whom he came in contact. While still in the flower of his youth, he resolved, like so many other distinguished men of that twelfth century, to devote himself to religion. He inquired for the most austere and spiritual of the many monasteries which in that age were competing for the crown of life, and chose Citeaux. With him thirty world-weary men, some of them distinguished, became professed monks of the Burgundian house, the name of which was so soon to ring through Europe. Partly from its growing fame for sanctity, partly from the presence of Bernard, the resistless magic of whose eloquence attracted crowds of votaries, Citeaux soon became too small to contain its monks, and colonies or daughter houses were quickly sent forth. One of these colonies, which chose the secluded Champagne valley of Clairvaux (Clara vallis) as the site of a new Citeaux, was headed by Bernard, who became the abbot of the new house. For nearly forty years he remained connected with this society, from which he derived the name by which he will be ever remembered in the annals of monasticism —Bernard of Clairvaux.

Never would he accept further ecclesiastical dignity. Bishoprics of influential sees were continually offered him, but invariably declined. Langres, Chalons-sur-Marne, Genoa, Pisa, desired him in vain for bishop; Milan, the most important see in Italy after Rome; Rheims, the first of the French sees, were offered to him; but the abbot of Clairvaux was inflexible in his refusal to accept any ecclesiastical preferment. Not only was he acknowledged to be the foremost preacher of his age, but he was the most influential as an adviser and counsellor of all sorts and conditions of men, from the most powerful prince to the humblest of mankind. His wondering followers, we are told, "saw miracles in all his acts, and prophecies in his words. He was at once the joy and the honour and glory of the whole Catholic Church," said in a later age the great Baronius, "the Church's leading and governing head, and all the while the humility of his heart surpassed the majesty of his fame."

During these forty years of ceaseless work he was a constant sufferer from ill-health, his early austerities having utterly sapped his strength. His usual meal was a bit of bread moistened with warm water. He had almost entirely lost the power of distinguishing the taste and flavour of food and drink, and relished nothing but water, which cooled his throat. The very thought of food for that frail, dying body was commonly repulsive to him. But

* Freeman: "The Norman Conquest," chap. xxiii.

with all his bodily sufferings he never relaxed his self-denying labours; and with advancing years and ever-growing weakness his reputation among men increased, as did the reverential love by which he was constantly surrounded. His generation looked on him as inspired. No wonder, with Bernard as abbot of Clairvaux, that Citeaux and Clairvaux kept sending out their colonies; and before the singular and blessed career of the great monk was closed (1153), the Cistercian order he loved so well had spread over France and Italy, Spain and Germany, and our own England.

"*Le Temple, comme tous les ordres militaires dérivait de Citeaux*," writes the famous French historian, Michelet. Not among the least of the works of the great order of Cistercians, was their powerful support of, and close alliance with, the Knight Templars. It was Bernard of Clairvaux who played the part of champion of the famous order, who first lifted it out of weakness and obscurity and gave it that mighty impulse out of which, in that age and in the following, came its astonishing development and mighty influence, both on the Continent of Europe and in our own country.

Bernard had a peculiar sympathy for orders of chivalry, for the ideal knight of the Crusades; such as was the Templar in the earlier years of his wonderful career. The Templars were his special protégés. They were warrior-monks. As monks, they belonged to the order of St. Augustine; as warriors, their peculiar work on earth was "to fence with lances the path to the places which the Saviour had trodden, that the feeblest might in safety walk therein." The solemn vow of their order bound them never to fly, if singly attacked, before three infidels; to observe perpetual chastity; to assist in every way religious persons, and especially the Cistercians, as their brothers and their friends. For not a few years they kept their oath. Bernard's vast influence contributed largely to lift this famous order to the splendid supremacy of a century and three-quarters.

We have spoken of the great Cistercian monk as the first preacher of that age of an undreamed-of revival of religion; but Bernard was something more than a preacher—he was a great theologian. Two important points in his teaching are specially dwelt upon by his latest eloquent biographer. They will help us to grasp something of the teaching in vogue "in the mother houses" of the great Cistercian order—an order which played a great part in England in the twelfth and following centuries—concerning certain grave questions of theology, which gradually obtained a strange prominence in the history of the Church of England.

In the matter of the Holy Eucharist, differing from archbishop Lanfranc, Bernard of Clairvaux evidently considered that spiritually—not corporeally—the Lord was received in the Eucharist, and that only he who partakes of the wafer with responsive faith and love in the heart, has the essence of the Sacrament. "It was not a presence to be bruised by the teeth, or to operate any magical transformation, but a presence to be apprehended by the heart. . . . One can hardly conceive of any questions more

utterly remote from the whole sphere of Bernard of Clairvaux's thoughts about the Sacrament of the Supper than the questions which engaged and perplexed many minds after the doctrine of Transubstantiation had been formulated."*

As regards other grave questions which eventually assumed prominence at the period of the Reformation, Bernard's position, unlike his attitude with regard to Eucharistic teaching, was certainly not that taken up by the Reformation teachers. He believed, for instance, "that there remained beyond the grave a place of expiation in which God would deal with souls who had been imperfectly purified—not in anger, but in mercy; not for their destruction, but for their illumination and purification, that they might be completely prepared for the heavenly kingdom." He taught, again, that "the saints in light, in their superior nearness to God and their perfected holiness, would intercede for those still tarrying on earth on lower levels."†

In his exaggerated estimate of the blessed Virgin, also, Bernard of Clairvaux must be reckoned as one of those teachers who were influenced by that strange spirit of chivalry to which we have already alluded as a special outcome of the Crusades. He certainly taught men to render to the Virgin Mother, not the supreme adoration due only to God, but the modified homage, the "hyperdulia," which placed her as sovereign among the saints in light. "Men," said Bernard, "might always look to her with joy, with confident assurance of help and rescue amid the darkness and anguish of life." But yet even here, in this curious development of Christian teaching, the great Cistercian claimed far less for the "Mother of Sorrows" than the late teachings of Rome struggle after. When, in the year 1140, it was proposed at Lyons to institute a festival in honour of the "Immaculate Conception" of the Virgin, Bernard of Clairvaux wrote against it in no measured terms, declaring that the proposed rite was one of which the Church was ignorant, which reason did not approve, or ancient tradition commend. The Royal Virgin, he said, "needs no fictitious honours."

But it was as a preacher first of all that Bernard of Clairvaux won his unrivalled influence in Christendom. Luther declared him the best of all the doctors in his sermons, better than in his disputations; though even as a theologian Luther ranked him after only Augustine and Ambrose. We possess still nearly 350 reports of these discourses, which so largely affected the Christian world of the twelfth century, and which left on his great order so lasting an imprint. For the most part, certainly, these sermons seem to have been delivered in Latin, and many of them were preached in his own Clairvaux. Of course, the most popular of his sermons were in French; for instance, the sermon at Vézelai must have been in French. It was there that he preached the second Crusade before the king and queen, nobles and prelates, and a vast multitude; but of these great ones of the earth no one took any account. All eyes and thoughts were on Bernard, and as the winged words flew from his lips the passion of the assembly became uncontrollable. The cry of "Crosses!

* Dr. Storrs (New York): "Bernard of Clairvaux."
† Ibid.

ST. BERNARD PREACHING THE SECOND CRUSADE.

(By permission, from the picture by James Archer, R.S.A.)

crosses!" swelled to a roar. The vast number of crosses provided being utterly insufficient, clothes had to be torn up to supply them; and when he preached on the same all-absorbing topic at other great centres — Bâle, Frankfort, Cologne, Freiburg—the same strange scene was repeated, and it was thus that the second Crusade was launched on its way, that Crusade which resulted in so grievous a failure and awful loss of life. Wherever the beloved Cistercian went, crowds flocked to see him and to hear him, with a passionate reverence. The ornaments of gold and silver were taken from the churches and put away, as being understood to be displeasing to him. Men and women of all ranks arrayed themselves in mean garments, because they knew he disapproved of richness of dress. Crowds thronged him, eager to kiss his feet; fragments of his robe were treasured as precious relics. The age appeared, as it really was, better and brighter in his presence.

But upon all those tomes containing the sermons which once moved Christendom with so mighty a passion, the dust now lies thick; few eyes have looked upon them, fewer still have read their contents. But tens of thousands in England have sung or listened to the beautiful translation of his hymn·

> "O Sacred Head, now wounded,
> With grief and shame weighed down!"

or to the yet more popular one:

> "Jesus, the very thought of Thee
> With sweetness fills my breast;
> But sweeter far Thy face to see,
> And in Thy presence rest."

Let us picture to ourselves this ideal monk, this noblest type of a monasticism which had effected so blessed a change in the religion of Europe, which was playing so large a part in Christian teaching and practice in our own England after the Conquest. "Bernard was fair and saintly in face and person, and possessed a singular beauty and charm of utterance, so that to listen to him was a constant delight. As men gazed on his frail attenuated figure—his whole body most delicate and without flesh (*corpus omne tenuissimum, et sine carnibus erat*), worn at last almost to transparency by vigils and fastings, by constant prayer, by his care of all the churches—they came hardly to associate him with earth. The pallid and commanding face, full of human affection and heavenly hope, with his thin fair hair, with eyes which are spoken of as dove-like, yet which glowed at times as if lit up with divine fires; the modulated voice, which quivered like a harp string or rang like a trumpet in his changing emotions—all these affected and impressed his hearers. He seemed to speak as one who had communion with heaven." *

He has never been forgotten. A century and a half after his death, Danté in his great poem sees him amidst the blessed spirits in the tenth sphere, in the midst of the snow-white rose which opened its concentric leaves—faces of flame and wings of gold—beneath the influence of the Eternal Son; sees in him the exemplar of contemplation, the surpassing model of a devout charity, the guide of those who with disciplined sight would mount along the rays of heaven. Such had he been when working on earth, with a force so

* Dr. Storrs.

tireless in a body so feeble. So the records of history set him before us.

"I thought I should see Beatrice, and saw
An old man, habited like the glorious people,
O'erflowing was he in his eyes and cheeks
With joy divine, in attitude of pity.
. . . . . .
. . . . The man who in this world
By contemplation tasted of that peace." *

Two years before Bernard of Clairvaux's death, at the general chapter in 1151, the Cistercian order numbered 500 houses. In the following century there were as many as 1,800 monasteries which followed the rule of Citeaux; eventually even this number was much increased. In England, at the period of the dissolution of the religious houses, after an existence of some four centuries, there were about a hundred Cistercian abbeys, in addition to many smaller dependencies or cells.

The effect of the great monastic revival in England has been scarcely ever fairly taken into account by historians. The great wave, which gave so powerful an impetus to church life on the continent of Europe, reached England only a few years later than the events which we have been sketching. While the desolating civil war attendant on the quarrel between Stephen and Beauclerc's daughter, the empress Matilda, was at its height, monks of the Benedictine and Cluniac orders were quietly busied in all parts of England in building those vast piles which make up a religious house—cloisters, dormitories, chapels, hospitals, granaries, barns, storehouses. Soon the newly-founded Cistercians joined their brethren of the older orders in the good work which was being carried on in our island. One hundred and fifteen monasteries were built during even the nineteen disturbed years of Stephen's reign. During the period of Henry II. (Plantagenet) one hundred and thirteen more of these monasteries were erected, many of them marvels of grace and beauty; in the case of the Benedictine and Cluniac houses, often richly adorned within and without. Some of their abbey-churches were of vast size and exquisite proportions.

When we think of these two hundred and twenty-eight religious houses, mostly owing to Benedictine and Cistercian industry and devotion, we must take into consideration what were the probable numbers of the population for whose service this crowd of homes of prayer and teaching were intended. At most, the whole population of England and Wales, when Henry II. was king, did not amount to four millions—considerably less than the present number of the inhabitants of London! Probably this estimate is too great, for about a century and a half later, after the fatal year of the mortality of the great pestilence of A.D. 1349, the whole population of England and Wales does not appear much to have exceeded two millions. Thus the estimate of four millions at the close of the twelfth century, while conceding that nearly half the population perished in the Black Death, makes no allowance for any increase in the numbers of the people during the intervening century and a half. Four millions, then, at the close of the twelfth century is a very ample, perhaps too ample an estimate. The numbers above given of

* "Paradiso," xxxi., 57–94.

the increase of monasteries in the twelfth century, for such a population, will give some idea of the power and influence of the Benedictine and Cistercian in England, after the great church revival in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

We have styled them rightly "homes of prayer," but they were something more. They were preachers of religion, these disciples of Cluny, Citeaux, and Clairvaux; but they were also great and successful preachers of *labour*. To their patient industry was owing in England the reclamation of many a desolate moorland, of many an unhealthy and useless swamp. Measureless was their skill and patient labour in changing worthless lands into corn lands and pastures. So eager, indeed, were the Cistercians in their beneficent work, that it is said that in their industrious zeal they even desecrated churchyards, and encroached on the borders of royal hunting forests and chases. These tireless monks grew famous for the breeding of horses, and were learned in the various species of palfreys and sumpter-horses and knights' chargers. They thanked heaven for the "blessings of fatness and fleeces," as foreign weavers from Italy and Flanders sought their wool; in fact, these monks, before the thirteenth century had run its course, had made England the great wool-growing country of Europe. The church's work in England in the department of letters and literature in the early Middle Ages, has often been dwelt upon, and its enormous service to literature has been generally acknowledged. Its work in agriculture, however, and in the development of commerce, is certainly less known and less commonly acknowledged. The thought that "*laborare est orare*" (labour is prayer) was emphatically the outcome of the teaching of the revived monasticism, at least in the earlier phases of its development in our island.

The mediæval church, from the thirteenth century onwards, generally recognised four principal monastic rules, under which almost all the religious orders might be classed:—

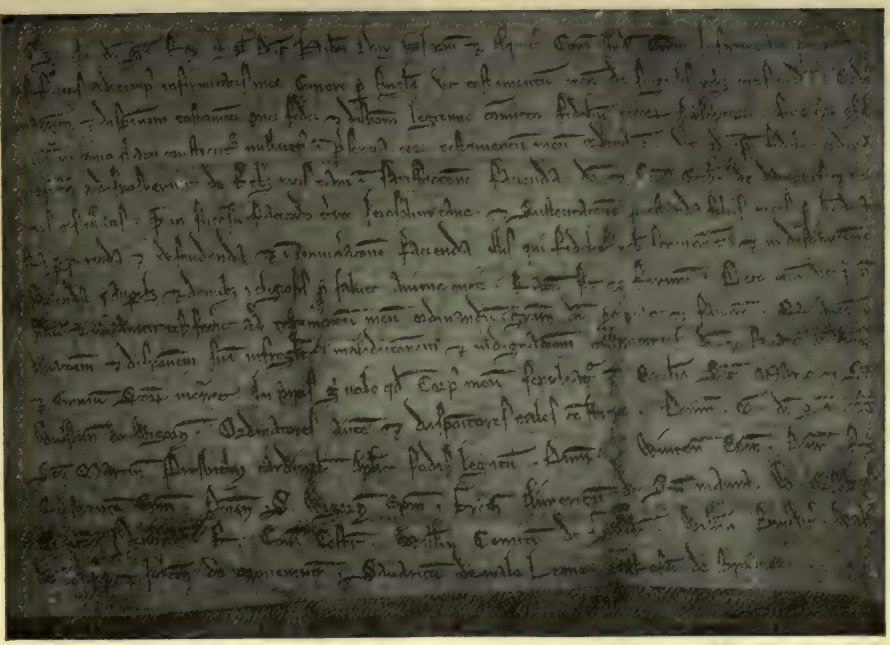
(1) In the East, that of *St. Basil*. This rule is retained by well-nigh all Oriental monks.

(2) Rule of *St. Augustine*, adopted by the regular canons. The order of Præmonstratensians, the Dominicans, and the great military orders, such as the Templars and the Knights Hospitallers, belonged to this rule.

(3) Rule of *St. Benedict*, generally adopted by all the monks of the West. The order of Camaldules of Vallombrosa, the Carthusians, and the Cistercians recognise this rule as the basis of their special and peculiar constitutions.

(4) Rule of *St. Francis*, adopted by the Mendicant orders of the thirteenth century.

The denomination *monks* is not generally given to the religious who follow the rule of St. Augustine, or to the Mendicant orders.



DOCUMENT WRITTEN AT KING JOHN'S COMMAND
(Directing that he should be buried in Worcester Cathedral. See page 245.)

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE CHURCH UNDER CŒUR-DE-LION, JOHN, AND HENRY III.

Character of Richard I.—His Religion—The Church and her Archbishops in this Reign—Clerical Celibacy still a Difficulty in England—Transition from Communion in both Kinds to one Kind only—Canons of the Synods—Churchmen the Defenders of Popular Liberties—Death of Richard and Accession of John—The Worst Sovereign of England—John loses his French Territories—Quarrel with the Pope over the Archbishopric of Canterbury—Stephen Langton—England under an Interdict—John Excommunicated—Makes Abject Submission, and acknowledges the Pope as Suzerain—Papal Exactions—Langton Resists them—Barons join in the Struggle—Magna Carta—Langton's Leading Part in the Great Charter—John's Perfidy—His Death, and Accession of Henry III.—Transubstantiation and Confession Decreed by the Fourth Lateran Council—Weak Character of Henry III.—Struggle of the English Church with renewed Papal Exactions—Papal Tyranny the Ultimate Cause of the Reformation—Edmund Rich of Canterbury—Grosseteste of Lincoln—His Resistance to Roman Usurpation—Influence over Simon de Montfort.

WHEN Cœur-de-Lion stood before his father's body after it had been arrayed in all his kingly pomp, golden crown on the brow, sceptre in the hand, and the sword he had used so well girt on his side, Benedict, the Peterborough chronicler, tells us blood flowed from the corpse as in presence of a parricide.* He turned away appalled from the corpse of his mighty

* "Ac si indignaretur spiritus ejus de adventu illius."—*Chron. Benedict*, page 71.

father in the castle of Chinon, to commence those ten years of his reign which will ever be encompassed with a halo of romance. He was not a good man or a wise sovereign, but his very faults struck the imagination of men; and Englishmen of his own day and time, as well as succeeding generations, have ever been proud of the mighty soldier who won for English arms such glory and renown. Most writers, while conscious that the great and glorious king, the first soldier of that age of war, was a bad son, a bad husband, and a selfish ruler, yet plead for him and defend him. They picture him as a knight-errant, a lover of war for the mere delight of battle and the charm of victory; they love to dwell on his marvellous valour, his skill as a commander; they rehearse his many acts of magnanimity and nobleness, and try to make men forget the awful misery and wretchedness which such a career as his occasioned, alike to his own people and to his rivals and enemies.

It is strange that no character in mediæval history, with its brilliant colouring and yet darker shadows, stands out like that of Richard of the Lion Heart. His mighty position as sovereign of so many lands; his reckless bravery, and the religious aspect of his life-work in warring for the sacred scenes hallowed by the Saviour's footsteps; his eloquence, his love for poetry and for song, his wonderful power of winning the love of men better and wiser than himself; his generous readiness in forgiving personal injuries; his wisdom in the choice of able and patriotic ministers—all these things succeeded in winning him an abiding place in the hearts and homes of England. And yet Richard was emphatically a bad man and a selfish king. His standard of morality was so low that even his admirers—and they were many—are either silent or sorrowful when they speak of that life, which set so ill an example to his court and people. With all this, Richard Cœur-de-Lion was also conscious of his own vileness and corruption. Instances are given by his biographers of his occasional agony of remorse; and on his death-bed he openly and sorrowfully confessed his life of sin.

Upon this brilliant, selfish life, religion exercised considerable control, and largely contributed to diminish its evil influence on the world generally. The leading feature in Richard's character was the love of war; but the wars in which he was perpetually engaged were for no mere acquisition of territory, or for the increase of his already great power, but were undertaken mainly for the sake of rescuing the Holy Land from the grasp of the unbeliever. The strange passion for these Crusades which for so long a period affected the history of the Christian world, certainly among the nobler spirits who took part in these wonderful campaigns, was totally unconnected with mere political objects. The Crusades were almost wholly purely religious movements; and among Richard's chosen crusading companions and friends we find some of the leading men of the Church of England, notably Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, and Hubert Walter, bishop of Salisbury, who after a brief interregnum succeeded Baldwin as primate.

The active part which these two eminent prelates of the Church of England took in the great Crusade in which Cœur-de-Lion

won his fame, shows us something of the strange power and fascination which the wars of the Cross exercised at this period over the hearts of even the noblest churchmen. Baldwin, the archbishop of Canterbury, was an old man when, in helmet and cuirass, with the sacred banner of St. Thomas Becket borne before him, he took the field in the Holy Land. The bishop of Salisbury, afterwards his successor, fought by his side; other foreign prelates accompanied him, and their division of the crusading army was under the command of the Grand Master of the Temple. But Baldwin, after showing conspicuous valour, died in the Holy Land, men said of a broken heart. Besides his duties as a soldier, the famous English churchman was distinguished for his assiduous ministries among the sick and wounded. The sad episodes of suffering, alternating with the wild and dissolute scenes of the crusaders' camp, preyed upon the old man's mind, and he sickened and died at the sight of these sad spectacles—both the awful suffering and the nameless sins. His companion, Hubert Walter of Salisbury, distinguished himself after the archbishop's death not less as a soldier than as a minister of religion in the bloody scenes of Richard's crusade. He was ever Richard's counsellor and chosen friend, and, during Cœur-de-Lion's unfortunate captivity in Germany, visited the great crusader in his prison, and was foremost in England, both in counteracting prince John's intrigues during his kingly brother's captivity, and in raising the large sum demanded from England for king Richard's release.

It was no doubt in gratitude for his loyal friendship that Cœur-de-Lion procured this Hubert Walter's election to the vacant primacy in 1193. For some five years, in addition to the archbishopric, Hubert acted as justiciar of England, and till almost the close of Richard's reign played the chief part in all civil as well as ecclesiastical matters. Ever a loyal and

SEAL OF ARCHBISHOP HUBERT WALTER.
(*British Museum.*)

devoted servant of the king in the many offices he had filled, as royal chaplain, as a captain in the crusading host, as the king's treasurer, as his ambassador, then as justiciar of England, this crusading archbishop has left behind him a high character as a patriot statesman, though perhaps not of the first rank.

In king Richard's days the church made no great strides either in learning or in

influence. Still, it held its own. Everything was, however, subordinated to the one great passion for the Crusades. The spirit of the king permeated all classes and orders of his subjects, and immense sums were diverted from all the more practical objects to the furtherance of these costly holy wars. We get some idea, though, of the inner life and discipline of the Church of England at this time, from the canons of certain important synods.

The synod of Westminster was held a few years previously (in A.D. 1175). We mark, from the canons passed in this church assembly, the extreme difficulty which still existed in England of enforcing the celibacy of the clergy, that rule so insisted upon by all the most influential church leaders and teachers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as absolutely necessary for the work and progress of the church. These canons of the year 1175 ordered that any priest or clerk in holy orders who declined, upon a third admonition, to put away his wife—styled here a concubine—was to be summarily deprived of his benefice; while no one was to be beneficed who lived with a wife. Another canon of this synod sternly prohibited any clerk in holy orders from eating and drinking in taverns. Another referred to the habit of dressing as lay persons, then evidently too prevalent among the clergy. They were to avoid wearing long hair, and only to use such clothes and shoes as were decent; they were not to bear arms. Simony was evidently not unknown, for a canon rigidly forbade any money or covenanted gain being given for the presentation to a benefice.

In ritual matters we see that communion in one kind had become a general practice already in the Church of England; but this practice was evidently distasteful to many of the clergy, for this synod forbids the common practice of "sopping the Eucharist, as if the communion were by this means more entirely administered." The Cistercians were opposed to this practice of administering the communion in one kind; they were in the habit of receiving the wine through a quill or pipe, which was to be only of silver gilt.

In the synod of York, held under the crusading archbishop, Hubert Walter, in 1195, again the dress of clerics is dwelt upon, and certain of the canons of this assembly ordain that lay apparel be avoided, directing that priests go not in capes with sleeves, but in apparel suitable to their order; that priests also should preserve their crown and tonsure, avoiding long hair.

The synod of Westminster in 1200, also under the presidency of the same archbishop, Hubert Walter, issued strict directions for decorum in reading the service, enjoining a careful pronunciation of the words of the prayers, avoiding all affectation, and aiming alone at a plain and distinct enunciation of the words of the divine office. Careful rules were also put out for the guidance of archdeacons at their visitations. These officials were to exact nothing from the inferior clergy. They were to see that every church possessed a silver chalice. In the words of one of the canons: "We charge that the Eucharist be not consecrated in any chalice not made of gold or silver, and that no bishop bless a chalice of tin." The last part of this injunction seems to have been

CRUSADERS ON THE MARCH.

(By permission, from the picture by Sir John Gilbert, R.A., P.R.W.S., in South Kensington Museum.)

relaxed in some cases. Also a sufficiency of decent vestments for the priest, necessary books and utensils, and whatever was necessary for the honour and dignity of the sacrament, were to be provided. The vicars of the churches were to receive a decent competency out of the goods of the church. These and other canons show us that in the church in the latter days of Henry II. and of Richard I. considerable attention was given to the due administration of the sacred rites in outlying villages, as well as in the great centres of population, and that a careful supervision was exercised over the life and habits of the clergy, and even over their dress and general appearance. It is interesting to see how, even in these days of continual wars at home and abroad, and when the crusading fever was the one absorbing passion among men, the inner life of the church in its poorest and most remote churches was carefully watched over in such matters as the provision for decent vestments for the clergy, and chalices of precious metals for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Whilst a reverent provision, at least, was made for the due performance of services in the smaller and more remote churches, it is clear that in the abbeys and cathedrals an extraordinary magnificence of ritual was maintained. The catalogue of bequests to the church of Canterbury by Richard's favourite archbishop, Hubert Walter, gives us some insight into the vestments and ornaments possessed by the chief pastors in these times. Among the objects he left to the church were palls embroidered with gold, a golden chalice, cruets of crystal, a portable altar of chalcedony, a cross inlaid with a portion of the true Cross, a girdle and comb of ivory, six mitres, three pairs of gloves, all beautifully adorned with gold and gems, candlesticks and cruets of silver, a censer of silver, basons of silver, cups of gold, golden rings encrusted with gems, and many other precious vessels for the service of the sanctuary.

To pass from the inner life of the Church of England to its work and influence in the higher regions of statesmanship. The great churchmen of the last age of the Angevin monarchs were worthy of the lofty and patriotic traditions of the great church to which they belonged. It is true they contended for the privileges of their church ; but in contending for their own rights they ever fought at the same time the battle of the people. We hear their voices raised in remonstrance against wrong, when the voice of the barons was silent. For instance, when Cœur-de-Lion demanded English money to pay a military force to be employed in the king's foreign wars, St. Hugh of Lincoln, the Carthusian friend of Henry II.—a foreigner, but who in his English see had learned the truest traditions of his adopted country—refused the king's demands, nobly replying that the church was bound to do faithful service to the crown *within* the island realm, but was *not* bound to contribute men or gold for service beyond the sea. In his bold assertion of the rights of Englishmen, St. Hugh was stoutly backed by bishop Herbert of Salisbury. The opposition of the church in this important question was successful, and thus a great principle of English right was established.*

* See Freeman's "Norman Conquest," chapter xxvii.

On the whole, the relations of the church with king Richard I. were friendly. Some of her leading prelates, as we have seen, were among his chosen friends. They were inspired with his crusading passion, and we find them entrusted by him with the highest administrative posts in the kingdom. "Cœur-de-Lion shared in common with many other great warriors in that sincere yet formal attachment to ceremonial religion, which, considering the circumstances of a soldier's life, must be accepted by the moralist, in default of any higher development, as the expression of a mind which willingly and humbly recognises the source of all power and might."* He heard mass every day, and was zealous in collecting relics of the saints, and was generally very popular with the clergy. In their Chronicles and memoirs we find the best and most eloquent apologies for his faults, mingled with many words of praise for his valiant and doughty deeds. The ecclesiastical Chronicler loves to term him "the sword and shield of Christians, the adored of his men-at-arms, the honoured alike by clergy and people, the protector of the church, the unwearied listener to divine offices."

Richard's most attached friend was a Cistercian abbot of the monastery of St. Mary du Pin in Aquitaine, who, with the special permission of the Citeaux chapter, was constantly in his court, about his person, "that he might with all solicitude undertake the care of the king's alms and of the poor." He was with the king in his last illness, dutifully admonishing his loved master to confess his sins; he administered to him extreme unction; closed his eyes and mouth when the "Lion-hearted" expired, and with his own hands bathed the royal head with the liquor of balsam. It was in this mortal sickness that, with his characteristic generosity, king Richard forgave the archer, Bertrand de Gourdon, whose arrow caused his death-wound, and who dared to speak before the dying monarch words of bold defiance. The dying king ordered his slayer to be set at liberty with the present of a sum of money.

The worst sovereign that ever sat on the throne of England followed the brilliant, unprincipled soldier, Cœur de-Lion. "Edward III. may have been as unprincipled, but he is a more graceful sinner; William Rufus as savage, but he is a more magnificent and stronger-willed villain; Ethelred the Unready as weak, false, and worthless, but he sins for and suffers with his people. John has neither grace nor splendour, strength nor patriotism; history stamps him as a worse man than many who have done much more harm."* The deeds of John—his unbridled immorality, his many acts of cruelty and mockery, the lingering deaths to which he loved to condemn his victims, his cowardice, his utter faithlessness—make up a dreary story which can be told of no other mediæval king. He followed his brother, to whom he ever played the traitor, on the throne of England in 1199.

Within three years of his accession, king Philip of France pronounced sentence of forfeiture of his French dominions, pro-

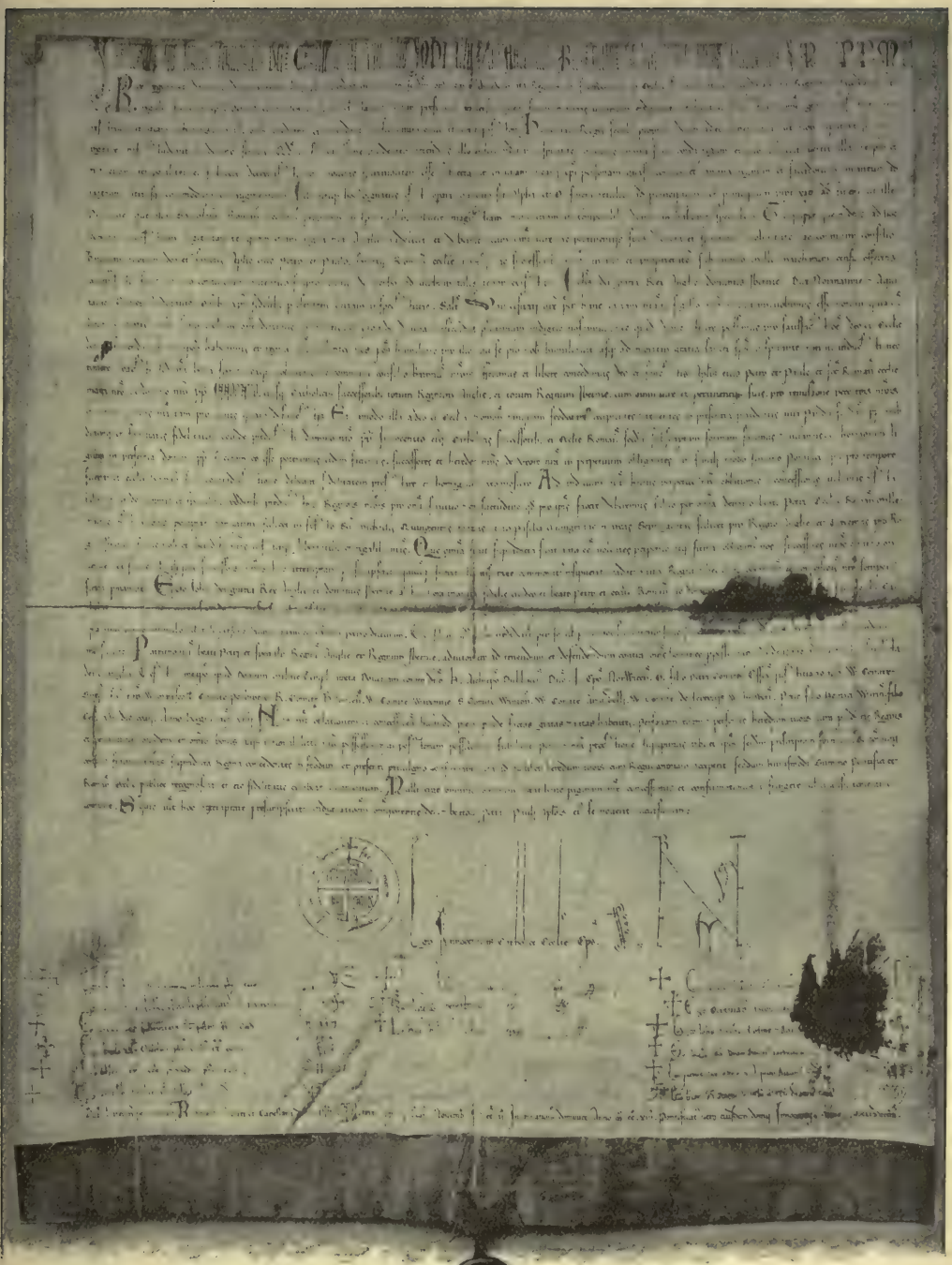
* "Itinerarium Regis Ricardi" (Rolls Series): Preface by Bishop Stubbs.

* Bishop Stubbs' Preface to "Memoriale Walteri de Coventria" (Rolls Series).

claiming John a contumacious vassal. In the following year (1203) he issued a second sentence of forfeiture, this time proclaiming John as the murderer of his nephew Arthur ; and then with startling rapidity all John's continental dominions—Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Brittany, and Touraine—slipped for ever out of his hands, only the southern province of Aquitaine being left to the crown of England. The loss was enormous. From being one of the most powerful of the continental sovereigns, henceforth John and his successors were simply kings of England ; for the distant and remote possession of Aquitaine gave them little weight beyond the seas. This rending away of the fairest portion of his continental dominions, great though the loss seemed, was however in the long run productive of untold advantage to England.

The death of archbishop Hubert Walter, the crusader statesman, the faithful friend of the dead Richard, which took place in 1205, two years after the loss of Normandy and its dependencies, deprived John of his wisest counsellor, and immediately led to that breach between the king and the church which had such momentous consequences for England. Briefly, the events which led to the great quarrel are as follows. Immediately after the death of the archbishop, the monks of Canterbury, before the funeral of Hubert Walter, without any communication with the king, elected to the primacy Reginald, their subprior, a comparatively unknown man. Their act was illegal ; and a minority of the Canterbury clergy, disagreeing with the choice of their brethren, applied to king John for a *congé d'élire*. The king immediately recommended John de Gray, bishop of Norwich. Both these claimants submitted their cause to Rome. The reigning pontiff, Innocent III., one of the greatest and most astute of the long line of Roman bishops, saw his opportunity in this reference on the part of the king and the monks of Canterbury to his supreme authority, and, setting aside the claims of both Reginald and John de Gray, pronounced that the election had been informal, and suggested that a Roman cardinal of English birth, Stephen Langton, should be archbishop. It was to no purpose that John protested against the choice. Innocent III. insisted on his appointment, and in the year 1207, with the reluctant consent of the monks of Canterbury, who had gone to plead the cause of their nominee at Rome, consecrated Langton as primate of the English church.

This famous patriot, statesman, and churchman was an Englishman by birth, and had received his training at the University of Paris, which at the close of the twelfth century ranked as the foremost of the theological schools of Europe. He soon became distinguished as a renowned biblical scholar and canonist, and received lucrative preferment at Notre Dame, and also, singularly enough, from the cathedral of York. At Paris he made a friend who influenced his whole career—Lothaire, who at a comparatively early age became Pope, under the world-renowned name of Innocent III. Summoned by the latter to Rome, Stephen Langton in 1206 was preferred to the high dignity of cardinal, Innocent III. being conscious of the vast learning and the brilliant abilities of the English scholar.



BULL OF POPE INNOCENT III.

The Bull ratifies the offering and grant made by John of his kingdoms to the Holy Roman church, in return for which he takes the kingdoms under the protection of St. Peter and himself, and grants the kingdoms to John on condition of public recognition and oath of fealty by each successive king on his coronation.

Attested by the "sentence" of the Pope, "Fac mecum domine signum in bonum," his name and monogram "Bene Valete" followed by the autograph signatures of twelve cardinals and three bishops. Dated at the Lateran 4 November, 1213, with leaden "bulla" attached.

(British Museum.)

A cardinal of Innocent III. did not, indeed, occupy the commanding position in the Roman hierarchy which subsequently was associated with the dignity; but it was even at that early period a high and influential office. The cardinals formed the college of counsellors of the

SEAL OF STEPHEN LANGTON. (*British Museum.*)

sovereign pontiff—no small responsibility when it is remembered to what a lofty eminence the bishop of Rome had been raised in the times of Hildebrand (Gregory VII.). The cardinals, too, were alone eligible to the papacy, and by cardinals was the Pope elected. The *red hat* with its tassels, signifying that its wearer was prepared to shed his life-blood in resistance against wrong done to the Christian faith, was not assigned to them as the symbol of their office until A.D. 1245, in the papacy of Innocent IV. Their assumption of a position of equality with princes of royal birth belonged also to a later age. Still, the dignity to which Stephen Langton was raised through the favour of his old friend, Innocent III., was so highly prized, that John himself had thrice congratulated the great English scholar on his elevation at Rome to the cardinalate. There is no doubt but that Innocent III., in nominating his friend and counsellor to the primacy of the English Church, honestly believed that, besides placing a trusted friend and confidant in the most important see in western Europe, he was making the wisest possible appointment in the interests of the Church of England. His foresight was amply verified, though not in the way Pope Innocent III. expected.

King John, however, incensed at the rejection of his own nominee, bishop John de Gray of Norwich, refused the royal assent to the Pope's choice. In spite of Innocent's repeated, urgent, and finally threatening requests, John persisted in his refusal to acknowledge Stephen Langton as archbishop after his consecration at Rome. In the year 1208, in consequence of his refusal, the kingdom was placed under interdict. The Pope attempted from time to time to renew negotiations, but each attempt failed. The king, after the interdict had been proclaimed, made large confiscations of the estates of the English clergy, and many of the bishops who obeyed the Pope fled from the kingdom. This state of things lasted in the Church of England for some six years.

The interdict under which England was

placed was a very grave matter, and signified an almost total cessation of public church services. The abbeys, cathedrals, and churches were virtually shut up for six years. Prayers were to be said and sermons preached, but only on Sundays and in churchyards. Baptisms were to be performed, but in private houses only. Burials were forbidden in churchyards, but might be performed anywhere else. Priests might not attend the funerals of the laity, but were allowed to say the offices for the dead in private houses. The Eucharistic service ceased altogether. Marriages were solemnised, but only in the porches of the churches; and to the dying the viaticum was still administered. The church bells were silenced.* Among the privileged monastic orders mass was still celebrated; but it must be remembered that this sacred office, in the vast majority of cases, was performed in the monks' portion of the monastery church or abbey, the choir, and that even if the people were admitted, only a comparatively small number could possibly be accommodated in this portion of the sacred building. The Papal interdict in England, then, really meant an almost total cessation of religious rites for the vast majority of Englishmen. It seems, however, that in certain dioceses—Winchester, Durham, and Norwich—where the bishops remained, on the whole, faithful to king John during the period of the great quarrel, the interdict was only partially observed. The interdict was followed in 1212 by a special excommunication of John, and with it the sentence of deposition.

* Memoriale Walteri de Coventria: Preface of Bishop Stubbs' "Forma Interdicti" xlv.

John for a time paid little heed to the general or to the special curse of Pope Innocent. But at length the superstitious and suspicious heart of the king was touched. His fears were worked upon by his dread of the French king, Philip, abroad, and by his apprehension of treason at home, for he was conscious of the deadly hatred his evil government had excited. The long continuance of the interdict, no doubt, had its effect upon the king and his counsellors, but the burning words of a Yorkshire enthusiast, an ascetic named Peter of Wakefield, are said to have especially affected the superstitious monarch, and to have brought about his submission. This Peter went about asserting that John would not be a king on the next Ascension day, and that the crown of England by that time would be transferred to another. The king sent for the prophet, who persisted in his words of doom, adding that "if his prophecy proved to be a lie, John might do with him what he would."

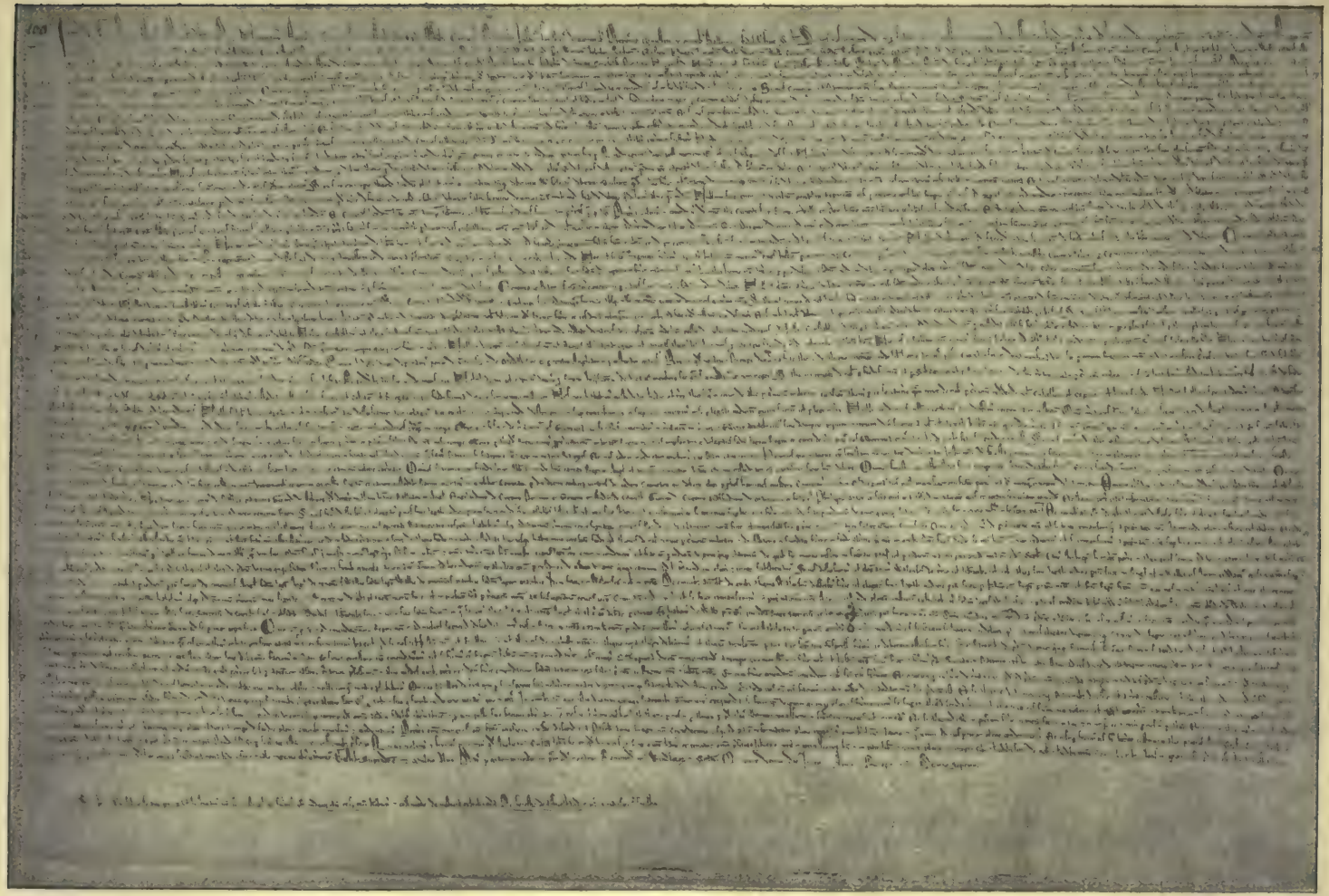
In the sequel John hanged the unfortunate prophet, but in the meantime his mood of defiance and indifference now suddenly changed; and in abject fear, he gave way on every one of the hotly disputed questions. He made his complete submission to the Pope; and accepting Stephen Langton as archbishop, he promised to repay the money he had exacted from the churches which had obeyed the interdict; and, as a crowning humiliation, positively surrendered his kingdom to Innocent III., agreeing to receive it back again as a Papal vassal! This shameful surrender on the part of an English king took place in the year 1213. The act, so far as England was concerned,

was the culminating point of Romish claims to universal supremacy. Never, probably, had Hildebrand dreamed of so strange a submission as that of John; and when Lanfranc and the Conqueror accepted the Pope as the patron of the expedition which conquered Anglo-Saxon England, they certainly never foresaw such a development of their acknowledgment of the supreme power of Rome, as the year 1213–1214 witnessed. Nothing could be more precise than the terms of the humiliating submission of the king of England, contained in the oath of supremacy, sealed with a golden seal, by which John acknowledged himself the vassal of the bishop of Rome. The oath ran thus:—"I, John, by the grace of God, king of England and lord of Ireland, will from this time . . . be faithful . . . to my liege lord, Pope Innocent, and his Catholic successors. . . . I will assist in holding and defending the inheritance of St. Peter, and particularly the kingdoms of England and Ireland, against all men to the utmost of my power. So may God and the holy Gospel help me."

The strange submission was received by the legate of Pope Innocent, whose name —Pandulph—as connected with this Papal triumph, will never be forgotten in England. Pandulph was a skilled diplomatist rather than an ecclesiastic, and at the time of the negotiation with John occupied no position in the church; in fact, was only in sub-deacon's orders. He was succeeded in the legation by an Italian bishop, Nicholas of Tusculum, an unfortunate appointment from the Roman point of view. For Nicholas, being a lover of pomp and dignity, insisted upon the Church of England, sorely impoverished by the years of interdict and the exactions and confiscations of John, supplying the money needful for the support of his princely retinue and luxurious lodging; and thus excited an intense dread and dislike of Roman interference in the Church of England. Nicholas visited many parts of the island, behaving himself with curious haughtiness, degrading abbots and sequestrating benefices at his pleasure, and filling up vacant posts in the church, utterly regardless of their proper patrons, and all this with the full connivance of John. A great sum of money, by way of tribute, was also demanded by this Roman official as the price of removing the interdict; and thus began the long series of usurpations and money exactions on the part of Rome, which ended by making the very name and thought of the so-called apostolic see infamous in England.

In the meantime, archbishop Langton returned from his long exile and was formally reconciled with John; and almost directly we find this "friend of Innocent" rising to the true position of primate of the English Church, and taking the lead in the patriotic resistance of the church, in which he held the principal office, to the unrighteous demands of Rome. Innocent III., in selecting Langton years before for the great office, had indeed, as far as England was concerned, made a wise and noble choice.

We must here take a general but very brief view of the action of the Church of England in the great contest of the English people for their liberties and rights; threatened first by the Norman barons, later by the crown, aided by the Pope.



MAGNA CARTA. (*British Museum.*)

The Norman and the Angevin kings, from the days of the Conqueror onwards, were ever in active opposition to the great and powerful barons, and during that long struggle the clergy of England as a whole had ranged themselves on the king's side. The church felt that in that stormy period "the strength of the king was the salvation of the people"; for the victory of the barons, all true-hearted churchmen saw, would have meant the woe of the mass of the population. So we find, especially during the reigns of the great Norman sovereigns, from William I. to Henry II., ecclesiastical ministers universally occupying the high offices in the state. The reason of this was that these sovereigns felt that churchmen "had so many interests in common with themselves that they were the safest men to trust." Even the long-drawn-out quarrels with Anselm and Becket did not interrupt these intimate relations between the king and the ecclesiastics of the Church of England; for, as a rule, the majority of the bishops and leading churchmen did not sympathise with Anselm and Becket. The support of the rank and file of the clergy was also given to the crown, for these men, deeply sympathising with their trodden-down flocks, looked on the oppression and exactions of the feudal barons with dread and intense dislike.

Time passed on. The strong arm and wise policy of Henry II. broke the power of the Norman barons, and in the latter years of Henry's reign the power of the crown had grown enormously. The crusading wars, the perpetual absences, and still more, perhaps, the wise ministers of Cœur-de-Lion, had veiled for a season this new and vastly developed power of the king. But in John's days it was different, and "he stood face to face with his people an unmitigated tyrant" of the worst kind. Thus, in the early years of the thirteenth century the balance of power had completely shifted, and the danger of oppression now came from the crown, not from the feudal barons. The king, not the baronage, now threatened the rights and liberties of the people; and the church, always the people's friend, no longer ranged itself on the side of the king, but rather stood in open opposition to him, and, as we shall see, joining with the enfeebled nobles, extorted from the crown, grown too powerful, the Great Charter of liberties and freedom. The man who was raised up to carry out this powerful combination, which accomplished so great a work in the making of England, was Stephen Langton, the former friend of Pope Innocent III., the patriot archbishop of Canterbury.*

Events for ever memorable in the history of England are at this period crowded into a short space of time. The same year (1213) witnessed the shameful oath of allegiance to the Pope taken by John—an oath repeated more than once; the return of archbishop Langton from exile; and the rising indignation of England with their king. Before the year had run its course, the meeting at St. Albans, attended by bishops and barons and a body of representatives from the townships, had been held. This was followed by another council at St. Paul's, where the laws of Henry I. were produced and expounded by archbishop Langton. By the side of the patriot archbishop at these famous

* See generally "Memoriale Walteri de Coventria": Bishop Stubbs' Introduction.

councils of the nation sat the justiciar, Geoffrey Fitz-Peter, earl of Essex, a great minister appointed by Cœur-de-Lion, and hated by John. Here the assembled Englishmen swore that they would maintain the liberties contained in that famous charter of Beauclerc even unto death.

This charter of king Henry I. here produced by Langton, embodied the old Saxon laws, known as the laws of Edward the Confessor ; and it was on this memorable occasion that the confederation was formed which, in the following year, met at St. Edmundsbury, and the year after at Runnymede. Immediately after the council at St. Paul's the justiciar, Geoffrey Fitz-Peter, after laying before the king the claims of the council, died. When John heard of the death of this great representative of the indignant barons, he exclaimed, "When Fitz-Peter arrives in hell he may go and salute Hubert Walter" (the archbishop friend of his dead brother, Cœur-de-Lion), "for, by the feet of God, now for the first time am I king and lord of England." John enjoyed that lordship but a short time, for in a little more than a year after his impious words he was dead, and in those few months he had affixed his royal seal to Magna Carta.

The prominent part taken by the Church of England in the events which led up to the granting of Magna Carta will ever be one of her titles to honour. The leader of the patriot party which compelled John to give his consent and affix his seal to the English people's Great Charter, was the head of the church—Stephen Langton. It was the archbishop who organised the party and suggested the entire framework of the Charter itself ; and he was loyally backed by the large majority of the English bishops. Only one, Peter des Roches, the justiciar, a foreigner, heartily supported John. A very few, such as Walter de Gray of Norwich—who had been put forward by the king as his candidate for the primacy when Innocent III. made choice of Langton for the high office—and Benedict of Rochester, took up an undecided position at this juncture.

The Great Charter itself was largely based on that of Henry I., and, while decreeing nothing new, gave new securities for the better observance of the old rights. It threw its shield over the rights of every Englishman, from the noble to the villein. It contained a crowd of provisions against various feudal abuses, and for the redress of the yet worse abuses of the forest—oppressive novelties which had been brought into England by the Norman conquerors. It secured the boon of free and unbought justice for all. The poor were especially provided for—those who stood outside feudal relations, and even those who might have seemed to stand outside of the pale of the law itself.* The first clause of Magna Carta, as in the charter of Henry I., secures the rights of the church, repeats and confirms the charter for the free election of bishops, and the great principle so often appealed to earlier and later—"that the Church of England was free" ("*Anglicana ecclesia libera sit*"). Little is it to be wondered at that the charter excited the indignation of Innocent III., who never forgave his old friend, archbishop Langton,

* See Freeman : "Norman Conquest," chap xxvii.

for the share he had taken in its being formally accepted and promulgated.

We can still see a copy of the "Great Charter," in which archbishop Langton had so large a share, in the British Museum, "injured by fire and dusky through age, with the royal seal of John hanging from it"; and as we gaze on the sacred monument of English freedom in church and state, to which from age to age serious men have looked back as the foundation of English liberty, a churchman must feel a thrill of pride as he remembers how large a share in the stirring transactions which resulted in the framing and passing of that glorious summary of English rights, was borne by the church he loves so well.

Directly after the passing of Magna Carta the traitor John asked Innocent III., as his liege lord, to annul it. At once the Pope consented, suspending from his high office, as might have been expected, the patriot archbishop Langton. Langton, who as a cardinal had received a summons to Rome to take part in the subsequently famous Fourth Lateran Council, left England, thinking he might influence his old friend Innocent in his policy towards England; but Innocent held very different views from Langton's as to the policy to be observed towards England and her church, and Langton was received at Rome with exceeding coldness and distrust.

For some months a cloud of utter blackness and even despair settled over England. Langton was far away. John, with a great host of foreign mercenaries, proceeded to devastate the whole land, storming castle after castle belonging to those barons who had just wrested from him the Charter of English freedom. A contemporary chronicler gives us a terrible picture of the months which followed the sealing of Magna Carta. "The whole surface of the earth was covered with these limbs of the devil, like locusts. . . . They sacked towns, cemeteries, and churches, sparing neither women nor children. Even the priests, while standing at the very altars with the cross of their Lord in their hands, clad in their sacred robes, were seized, tortured, robbed. . . . The persecution was general throughout England. . . . Markets and traffic ceased, and goods were only exposed to sale in churchyards. . . . Agriculture was at a standstill, and no one dared to go beyond the limits of the churches." In blank despair the barons sent for Louis of France to deliver them from the cruel tyrant John, and to assume the crown of England in his stead.

It was a moment of awful confusion, no one could foresee the end, when the knot was suddenly cut by the death of John, who, at the head of his army of foreign mercenaries, in his march northward, was surprised by the tide in the Wash near Lynn, and his baggage, with the royal treasure, engulfed in the rising waters. Rage and vexation at the curious disaster brought on fever, which was inflamed by a gluttonous debauch, and the evil life of king John was suddenly cut short. A singular and abiding testimony to the influence which the Christian religion, although under curious and superstitious forms, exercised over the ungovernable Plantagenet prince, is the stately tomb of John in the cathedral of Worcester. There the images of the famous Worcester saints, bishops Oswald and Wulfstan, lie on either side of the gilded effigy of the

king of England. It was John's wish, left in writing (still in the possession of the Dean and Chapter of Worcester) that his body should be buried between the relics of the two saints, a dim notion being in his mind that their holy dust would in some way guard him from any evil which he felt might be his lot after death.

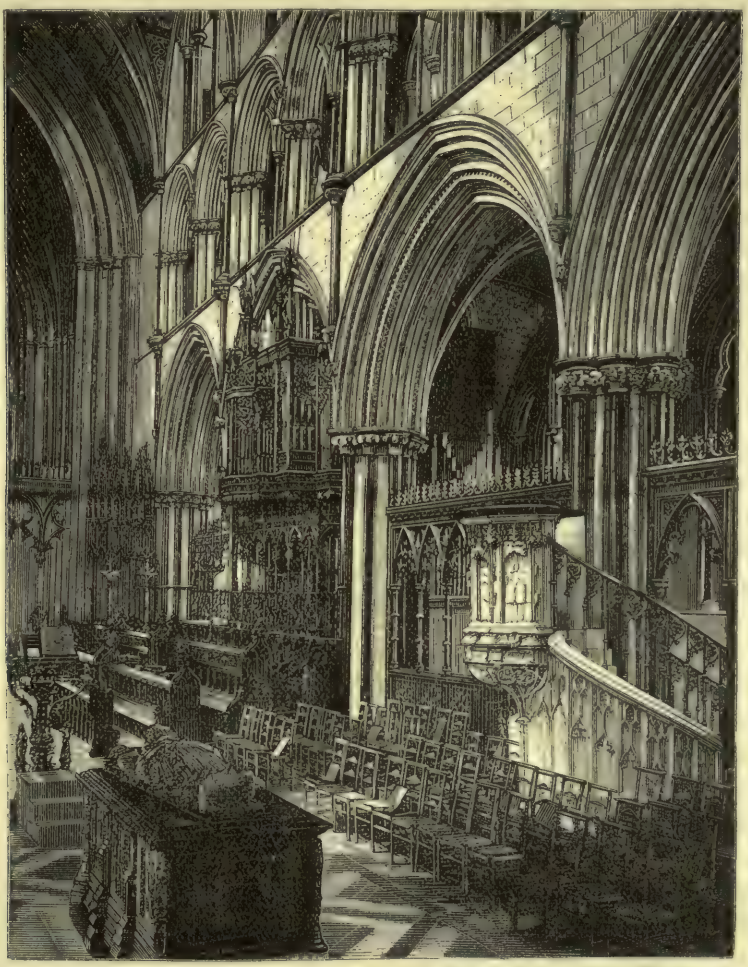


Photo: Bennett & Co., Worcester.

TOMB OF KING JOHN, WORCESTER CATHEDRAL.

John's son, still a child in years, was guiltless of his father's crimes; and the barons of England, quickly repenting of the sudden impulse of self-defence which had prompted them to invite into England a foreign prince, rallied round John's child-heir, who, under the title of Henry III., was hastily crowned in the stately abbey of Gloucester. The foreign invader was deserted, and soon retraced his steps, and

a new and happier reign began. The disaster of the Wash and the sudden death of John, followed by the hasty coronation at Gloucester of the boy Henry III., took place in the year 1216, the year which followed the signing of Magna Carta.

The special reason for which archbishop Langton was summoned to Rome, shortly after the historic gathering at Runnymede, was to assist as a cardinal at the Fourth Lateran Council, under the presidency of Innocent III. This council, which met in Rome near the close of the year 1215, and sat for nineteen days in the church of the Saviour, will be for ever memorable in the doctrinal history of the Roman Catholic church; for in its canons appears the first synodical authorisation of the doctrine of transubstantiation.

We have already at some length traced the story of the growth of this doctrine from the period of its first appearance, soon after 844, in the famous treatise of Paschasius Radbertus, abbot of New Corbey, in the days of the emperor Charles le Chauve. We have seen how, in spite of much opposition, the new Eucharistic teaching had rapidly gained ground in the churches of the west, and in the case of England was expressly adopted by archbishop Lanfranc in the time of the Conqueror. But no formal synodical authorisation of the novel doctrine had appeared, until Innocent III. drew up the canon to which we are now referring in the Fourth Lateran Council, A.D. 1215. The words of the canon are as follows:—"There is one universal church of the faithful, out of which no one at all is saved, in which Jesus Christ Himself is at once priest and sacrifice; Whose body and blood in the sacrament of the altar are truly contained under the species of bread and wine, which through the Divine power are transubstantiated, the bread into the body and the wine into the blood; that for the fulfilment of the mystery of unity we may receive of His that which He received of ours" (ut accipiamus ipsi de suo quod accepit de nostro).

Another canon of considerable importance was the outcome of the Fourth Lateran Council. It was the first which enjoined generally sacramental confession. The opening words of this canon were: "Let every believer, of both sexes, after he has come to years of discretion, faithfully make solitary confession of all his sins at least once in the year to his own priest, and study to the utmost of his power to fulfil the penance enjoined him, reverently receiving the sacrament of the Eucharist at least at Easter. . . . Otherwise let him while living be denied entrance into the church, and at death be deprived of Christian burial."

The thirteenth century in many respects was a remarkable and brilliant age. It was illustrated by the lives of many eminent men—kings, ecclesiastics, scholars, statesmen. From a churchman's point of view, the great event was the rise of a new power in the church, which not only largely influenced the age which witnessed its rise and extraordinarily rapid development, but which deeply coloured all church life in succeeding centuries. This coming of the "Mendicant orders," however, claims a separate chapter, in which its work will be presented with some detail.

King John died in the year 1216. The half-century which followed the sudden death of the evil king has been well described as a long time of struggle against foreign dominion and foreign influence in various shapes. During the young king's long minority, Rome stoutly asserted its right to interfere—a right based upon the infamous submission of John. Indeed, Rome's legates, Gualo and Pandulf, endeavoured to treat England as a vassal land; as regards the church, its independence was repeatedly asserted by the great primate Langton, who ever stood forth as the champion of her absolute freedom from foreign interference.

In the same year which witnessed the death of John, the great Pope Innocent III. died, in the full vigour of his manhood. He of all the Popes had advanced the most startling pretensions, and England was especially the scene of these exorbitant claims. Yet it is strange that this, in some respects, the greatest of the bishops of Rome, certainly the one who raised the throne of the pontiffs to its highest pinnacle of power, never obtained the honour of canonisation. There were even popular rumours that the soul of Innocent, escaping from the fires of purgatory, appeared on earth, scourged by pursuing devils, taking refuge at the foot of the Cross, and imploring the prayers of the faithful.

His immediate successors at Rome—Honorius III. (1216–1227) and Gregory IX. (1227–1241)—although wanting in the great talents of Innocent, in no whit abated their pretensions to sovereign rule over the Church of England; and, after the death of archbishop Langton, on several notable occasions pressed these monstrous claims. For instance: in the year 1226 a special legate, Otho, demanded that in every cathedral and collegiate church one prebend should be assigned for Papal uses, an equal revenue from the episcopal estates, and a proportionate sum from each of the monasteries; and this extravagant demand was only evaded on the plea that England was freed from such an exaction by her *tribute*, paid annually under the terms of John's submission. Before this strange demand Honorius III. had dared, in the year 1223, to declare the youth, Henry III., although not yet of age, competent to govern, and had issued letters to the barons of England, charging them to obey.

In A.D. 1229 Pope Gregory IX. demanded a tenth of all property. The clergy of the land, under threat of an interdict, gave a reluctant assent, and the preposterous tax was rigidly collected. On the sudden death of the undistinguished primate Richard le Grand, who for two years had filled the seat of Langton, the Pope appointed to the archbishopric of Canterbury Edmund Rich, chancellor of Salisbury, by an assumption of power as arbitrary as that by which Innocent III. had insisted on the election of Langton. This was in the year 1234. In 1240 a Papal brief arrived in England, addressed to the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishops of Lincoln and Salisbury, in which they were required to provide for *three hundred Roman clergy* out of the first vacant benefices!

These were notorious instances of special Roman claims and exactions. But during all these years of Henry III.'s reign the Church of England was perpetually harassed by Rome in various ways. A legate from

the court of the Pope was constantly present, ever pressing fresh and startling assumptions of power, resting on the new relation created by John's submission, as well as on the older spiritual claims of the "apostolic see." These assumptions of an irresponsible power included not only constant claims to subsidies of money, but also asserted the right of Rome to the patronage of churches, to the detriment of clerical and lay patrons. A steady flow of appeals to Rome, too, constantly irritated and disturbed all church government, producing a feeling of universal unrest, and perpetually suggesting insubordination and disorder. A spirit of bitter opposition was excited, and we find such noble prelates as Grosseteste of Lincoln, in public and in private, in his writings and by his acts, continually resisting this oppressive and disastrous Papal tyranny.

Indeed, one of the notable features of this thirteenth century was this strange and sad feature of Roman tyranny over the Church of England. It was no mere indefinite claim of over-lordship, of some ill-defined right of a universal supremacy in great and momentous matters, such as Hildebrand dreamed of, and largely succeeded in establishing; but Innocent III. and his successors in the thirteenth century asserted and exercised a so-called right to interfere and to decide in all church affairs, great and small. The meddlesome hand of Rome, in the persons of its legates, was felt not only in important councils and synods, but in every meeting of the chapter of the monastic houses. Appeals against episcopal and abbatial authority to Rome were listened to, and even encouraged; and a constant and ever-increasing demand for money filled up the measure of the sins of Rome against the English church. "The first article of the great Charter declared that the Church of England should be free. And to the minds of the men of the thirteenth century the freedom of the Church of England, if it meant freedom from illegal acts on the part of the king at home, meant no less freedom from the endless meddlings and extortions of the enemy beyond the sea. When the men of the sixteenth century prayed for deliverance from the tyranny of the bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities, they did but echo the voice of England in the thirteenth century and earlier still."*

The spirit of indignant resistance which appears in the actions of such true saintly men as archbishops Langton and Edmund Rich, and Grosseteste of Lincoln, and eventually in successive acts of Parliament directed against these iniquitous usurpations, went on gathering strength until the great storm burst in the sixteenth century. As far as England is concerned, the ill-advised and wanton pressure of Roman claims from and after the times of Innocent III. must be considered as one of the more considerable of the causes which led to the reaction of the Reformation. Looking back from the vantage-ground of the end of the nineteenth century, the student is tempted to wonder how great popes like Innocent III., men of commanding genius and stainless life, could have ever dreamed of permanently exercising such an unchecked domination over a church like that of the English people—a church with a great history reaching over many centuries, a church

* Professor Freeman.

loved and honoured by the nation alike in Norman and Angevin days, as in the more remote Anglo-Saxon period.

During the long reign of Henry III., the most prominent personages specially mixed up in public affairs connected especially with church and state, are the king himself, archbishops Langton and Edmund Rich, and Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln. The king himself has been well described as utterly devoid of all elements of greatness —as even vain and mean and false; and yet he was a prince undoubtedly accomplished and refined, a patron of art, and especially a benefactor of foreigners. On the whole, he showed himself a friend of ecclesiastics, decidedly pious, and, in an ordinary sense, virtuous. His great church-building work, the reconstruction—well-nigh the entire rebuilding—of Westminster Abbey in the form we know so well, has been already told.* Of the patriotic Langton, who, of course, exercised enormous influence during his minority (Langton died in 1228), we have already spoken.

Edmund Rich, archbishop of Canterbury from 1234 to 1240, by his guileless, devout, ascetic character, profoundly impressed the men of his generation. Trained in the new learning promoted by the Franciscan colony at Oxford, and subsequently at the University of Paris, he became a well-known and popular teacher in his time at Oxford, and subsequently was appointed treasurer of Salisbury. Among the stories of him, it is said that often after a whole night spent in prayer, he would fall asleep as he was lecturing, amid the respectful silence of his pupils, who admired his fervent piety and wondered at his great learning. As archbishop he ranged himself on the side of the national party, hating and steadily

AN ARCHBISHOP OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.
(*From a contemporary Psalter in the British Museum.*)

opposing, but with studiedly gentle resistance, the policy of ever-increasing encroachment on the part of Rome upon the liberties and rights of the Church of England.

His ascetic practices seem rather to have increased than diminished after his elevation to the primacy; for instance, he would only break his fast once in the

* See Chapter xxiv.

twenty-four hours, and on many days would only allow himself bread and water. From the frequency of his prayers, men said his knees became, like those of St. James, callous as the knees of a camel. He declined even the use of a bath; and at night, however worn and tired, he would not rest on a bed, but on a hard bench, or on the ground; and in later life would not even lie down, but would snatch a brief sleep as he sat on his chair. With shattered health, and wearied out by the perpetual struggles with Rome and the foreign influences in the state favoured by the king, in the year 1240 the archbishop withdrew to the monastery of Pontigny, in France; and a little later he sought the purer air of the monastery of Soisy, near Provins; but in a short time after his departure from England, worn out, he breathed his last. When dying, he still refused the "luxury" of a bed, and expired stretched on the cold ground.* Such a life—his great scholarship, his terrible austerities, his gentle, sweet nature—deeply moved his contemporaries. Within six years of his death the Pope, sorely against his will, was compelled by public opinion to admit the good archbishop to the honours of canonisation; and devout pilgrims from England loved for a long period to kneel at the shrine of St. Edmund of Pontigny and of Canterbury.

A churchman of a very different type existed in the person of Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, from 1235 to 1253. This scholar prelate very nobly represents the feeling which prevailed among the leading English ecclesiastics during the reign of Henry III. regarding the burning question of the assumption of supreme authority claimed by the Pope over the Church of England. St. Edmund of Pontigny and of Canterbury (archbishop Edmund Rich) felt as deeply as did Grosseteste the irreparable injury worked to the cause of true religion in England by these unhappy and disastrous claims; but Edmund was ever rather the gentle, uncomplaining saint than the fiery and militant church leader, who was necessary in those times to resist the fatal spirit of Rome. Such a vigorous church leader was found in Grosseteste; but unfortunately he was only bishop of Lincoln, not primate.*

Of this great man's early life we know nothing. He comes before us first prominently as rector of the fast-increasing society of Franciscan friars at Oxford, over whose early work and rapid development in England Grosseteste exercised a very remarkable influence. Several important ecclesiastical offices were held by him in succession in the Church of England before his preferment to the important see of Lincoln; such as the archdeaconries of Wilts, Northampton, and Leicester. He became bishop of Lincoln in the year 1235. The see of Lincoln was then the most extensive in the country, and extended from Lincoln as far south as Oxford and Bedford. In diocesan affairs he was a most unwearied and even a severe overseer. Among his more notable works may be enumerated his care to ensure that adequate provision was made for resident priests in outlying parishes, where the

* See Dean Hook: "Lives of the Archbishops," vol. iii. Edmund Rich

* Compare generally "Episcopi quondam Lincolniensis Roberti Grosseteste Epistolæ" with Mr. Lenard's preface (Rolls Series.)

church property was already vested in the monasteries and in other comparatively wealthy bodies. These monasteries he continually visited with great vigour, inspecting everything, and demolishing with a rigid and austere hand any marks of luxury that were contrary to the rule under which these communities were living. With the nunneries he was equally severe. Over parish priests and their life and work among their flocks, he maintained a constant and careful investigation.

But Grosseteste's especial work, which must ever be his title to honour, was his unbending spirit of resistance in the matter of Roman usurpation, which he felt was sapping the very life of the Church of England. It was not merely the dangerous multiplication of appeals to Rome in all manner of cases important and unimportant, and that thus all discipline and order in the church at home was undermined; but the constant system of exactions on the part of Rome seriously impoverished the English clergy of all grades. On one notable occasion the Pope threatened to lay the whole kingdom under an interdict, and thus to suspend all divine service and public religious rites, unless an extortionate and arbitrary demand was promptly satisfied. In spite of Grosseteste's strong remonstrances, in this case the money was all paid, and in the words of the English Chronicler, the "gapings" (*hiatus*) of Roman avarice satisfied.

The enormous number of Italian and foreign papal nominees to benefices and dignities in the Church of England, has been already alluded to. Very many of these foreigners were absentees from their various posts. In the year 1251 bishop Grosseteste had a calculation made of the revenues of the foreigners in the English church. It was found that Innocent IV., the reigning Pope, had done more to increase this immoral course of procedure than all his predecessors, and the income of the foreign clerks appointed by him in England, whom the Church of Rome had enriched, was found to amount to the sum—enormous, when we remember the value of money in those days—of seventy thousand marks and more.

In his last illness Grosseteste, in the course of a conversation with his physician and his clergy, dwelt in bitter language on the rapacity of the Pope, and on the cruel exactions and oppression to which the church was subject. No light crimes, indeed, were those of which the dying prelate accused the Papacy. He spoke especially of the abuse of mass being sent to the dying, and in such moments extracting a bequest of their property under pretence of its being applied for their benefit and for the succour of the Holy Land. He alluded also to ignorant foreigners being forced by Papal influence into English bishoprics and benefices, and bitterly referred to various instances of shameless avarice on the part of Rome.

The enormous influence which this true-hearted English churchman exerted in his time, cannot be overstated. Persons of all ranks naturally resorted to Grosseteste as the one best fitted to advise them. If a noble was anxious about his spiritual state, it was to the bishop of Lincoln that he naturally went; if the king wanted advice or assistance, it was to Grosseteste that he turned; if in a critical juncture the church needed a strong and wise counsellor, it

was to Lincoln that the primate at once resorted. Men like Simon de Montfort applied to him to advise in the training of special friend of Grosseteste, thus warmly sums up his sunny, bright influence, his ceaseless industry, his noble self-denying

THE CHOIR, LINCOLN CATHEDRAL. *Photo: Frith, Reigate.*

their children. Indeed, the great earl was especially intimate with him, and no doubt much of his policy in after-days was derived from conversations he had held with the patriot churchman, long his intimate and trusted friend. Matthew Paris, the work, his true English feeling:—"Grosseteste was an open confuter (redargutor) of the Pope and the king, the reprover of prelates, the corrector of monks, the support of scholars, the preacher to the people, the persecutor of the immoral, the un-

wearied student of the Scriptures, the harasser and despiser of Rome. At the spiritual table he was devout, tearful, contrite. In his episcopal office he was industrious, admirable, unwearied."

He has left behind him, besides numerous works—some on Aristotle, some bearing on theology—a considerable body of letters, which give us a clear insight into his mind and show us something of his lofty conceptions. But in literature his wonderful knowledge of Holy Scripture, perhaps greater than that possessed by any other scholar of his day, especially won for him the respect and admiration of the church. Of his private life we possess many interesting and curious details. He loved as a teacher to encourage diligent students, impressing on them the need of the study of Holy Scriptures, that they might not be like some monks who walked in the darkness of ignorance. Some of his kindly, playful sayings are preserved, such as his words to a preaching friar: "Three things were necessary for temporal health—food, sleep, and good humour" (*cibus*, *somnus*, *jocus*). His horror at anything of the nature of bribes or simony was excessive.

Although after his death the distinction was earnestly sought by his king and by other persons of great influence, the honour of canonisation was never conferred upon him by Rome. We can, however, scarcely be surprised that Grosseteste has never been enrolled among the company of Roman saints.

The last years of Henry III.'s long reign are memorable for the great revolt of the barons and the people against the oppression of the king and the Pope, known in history as the rebellion of earl Simon de Montfort. The details of this famous rising, which, although it ended in apparent disaster, yet worked momentous changes in the constitution of England, do not belong to our own story of the church. It must, however, be noted that the work and character of the popular hero, Simon de Montfort, were very largely influenced by the close intimacy, stretching over years, between the earl and Grosseteste, and Grosseteste's successor at Oxford and dearest friend—the learned Adam de Marisco. To his attitude as leader of the people's party, who in church and state resisted the Romish and foreign aggression, earl Simon de Montfort owed his strength in later years, when he successfully resisted the power and tyranny of the crown.

ARMS OF SIMON DE MONTFORT.
(*From a Sculpture in the North Aisle Arcade, Westminster Abbey.*)

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE COMING OF THE FRIARS.

Development of City Life—Consequent Misery and Disease—Francis of Assisi—His Brotherhood of Mendicants—Wonderful Growth of the Franciscan Order—Their Appearance in England—Their Principle of Poverty—Growth of Learning in the Order—Its Influence at Oxford—Its View of Asceticism—Special Devotion to the Virgin Mary—St. Francis Himself—The Stigmata—His Death and Canonisation—Dominic—His Order of Preachers—The Preaching Friars also Profess Poverty—Growth of the Order—The Tertiaries or Lay Communities—Death of Dominic—Influence of the Dominicans—Their Connection with the Inquisition—List and Statistics of Mendicant Orders in England.

THE period in the story of the English Church and state, of which we have now roughly sketched in the outlines—the last years of the twelfth, and the first half of the thirteenth century, when Cœur-de-Lion, John, and his son, Henry III., were kings in England—was an important epoch in the history of Europe; and no country, perhaps, was so much affected by what was taking place as our own. Great and momentous changes, the magnitude of which was unguessed by the living actors, were passing over the western peoples. A new and hitherto undreamed-of power had arisen, which dominated and tyrannised over the church, strengthened and re-invigorated by the great reforms of the eleventh century: the Papacy, as we now know it. Those strange Eastern wars called the Crusades, conducted on a scale hitherto unknown in the western world, under the influence of the bishops of Rome, had introduced into the western nations Oriental habits, tastes and sciences, Oriental modes of thought. Along with them, alas! were also introduced the moral and physical diseases of the East. The comparative quiet which succeeded the long and devastating invasions and settlements of the North-folk, had been favourable to the growth of commerce. Numerous and important cities had grown up, had been rebuilt, or had been marvellously increased. On the Continent we may instance such great centres as Venice, Paris, Cologne, Lyons, Bruges, and many others; in England: London, Bristol, Oxford, Norwich, Cambridge.

This last great change is especially noticeable, for it brought in its wake the new and potent element in church life we are now to speak of. The change in question was *the growth of city life*. Hitherto the great monasteries, the abbeys, and cathedral establishments, had fairly sufficed for the spiritual welfare, for the teaching and influencing, of the little populations dwelling in the comparatively few and small cities, or scattered in farms and small hamlets over the country, in these older and simpler conditions of society. But, as we have said, in the latter part of the twelfth and first half of the thirteenth century a new description of life—new at least in early mediæval times—gradually appeared in the west. City life, and the rapid growth of popu-

lation in numberless great centres, called for a new influence, new teachers, new preachers, new heralds of the religion of Jesus.

Things were, indeed, very evil in the town life of the early Middle Ages. A city then was made up of two classes : the class of comparatively wealthy traders, growing daily richer and more powerful, protected by guilds, free, living in some luxury, possessing teachers of religion, whom they often paid and maintained themselves, owning schools and even churches ; and side by side with these lived another and far more numerous class, for whom no one cared, answering in some respects to what we now term "the masses" ; increasing daily in numbers, but, alas ! not in health and wealth : verily hewers of wood and drawers of water. These were ever augmented by fresh recruits from the country, from the numerous armies of Crusaders and other royal and noble adventurers, which were hastily gathered together, and often as hastily disbanded, from all sorts and conditions of men, who had failed in the various ways of life. These mostly drifted into the new and rapidly growing towns, and swelled the populations growing up in and about the centres of commerce and industry and learning. The municipal buildings of a city, erected at an early date in these Middle Ages, and the ward immediately surrounding them, formed a striking contrast to the outer circle of a mediæval town, which consisted of dwellings, little more than wooden sheds, rudely plastered or whitewashed, huddled together, often close to river-bank or the side of the town ditch. Here dwelt a motley race, ever increasing in numbers, of whom little was known, and about whom little inquiry was made. If they behaved with decent quiet, they might live or die, no one very much heeding. This class of a town population in the first half of the thirteenth century was a dense slough of stagnant misery, squalor, and famine, such as the worst slums even of our modern cities are happily ignorant of. And into the midst of this seething mass of suffering, sad-eyed men and women, often came a terrible visitant in the form of a deadly disease, such as the plague, or even worse—*leprosy*. The latter, imported from the East, is one of the most terrible scourges which have from time to time afflicted men.*

For this numerous class no one cared ; their souls and bodies were equally neglected by Christian men and women, clerical and lay. The great monasteries had already provided for the country generally ; the cathedrals and minster churches for their immediate neighbours dwelling round them. The wealthier citizens, too, had their churches. But there was no spiritual provision for this large and ever-growing class ; they belonged to no one. When the need was at its sorest, God raised up a saint, who brought deliverance and a message of comfort to these unhappy ones.

Far away from England, where soon his name was to become especially known and honoured, a young Italian merchant of Assisi, an Umbrian city, recovering from a grave illness, determined to consecrate his life, hardly won from death, to the service

* *Cf.* "The Coming of the Friars," by Dr. Jessop.

of the saddest of his neighbours, especially to the lepers. These, all through that wonderful long life of Francis of Assisi, ever claimed the first-fruits of his love; but his early mission work among these sorely-tried sufferers, opened his eyes to the awful neglect in which most of the poorer dwellers of the cities of the western world were then living. Francis of Assisi and the strange army of devoted ones who were fired by his burning enthusiasm, became the especial apostles of the helpless, wretched, neglected masses of the towns.

Was Francis of Assisi a madman—a dreamy enthusiast? The question has often been asked, and variously answered. One thing is certain: no one in the long Christian story has exercised a greater, few so great an influence on the fortunes of the Catholic church. After his conversion he went out from his home and native city—friendless, homeless, penniless, with a burning, passionate desire to help the most destitute and helpless and suffering of his brother men. Absolutely confident in the ultimate success of his work, he threw himself at the feet of the mighty Pontiff, Innocent III. The story tells us how he suddenly presented himself before Pope Innocent as he was walking in the stately gardens of the Lateran, bareheaded, with bare feet, half clad, unkempt, and dishevelled—a beggar who would take no denial. The great bishop of Rome *must* bless him and his work: he would take no refusal. Innocent hesitated, and for a while thought over the strange apparition; but after a few hours, won by the strange charm and the intense earnestness of the suppliant, he blessed him, and bade him work his work under the approval of Rome.

Men soon began to talk of this new preacher of righteousness. His own city now welcomed him as a saint. Disciples gathered round him rapidly. Francis and his friends, as beggars, preached to beggars. In the low and miserable dwellings of the great cities; to the suffering, the outcast, the leper, for whom none cared and whom most shunned, Francis preached the story of the Cross in language such outcasts could understand. He would tell that dreadful, hopeless crowd that he was come to live among them, to wash the lepers' repulsive sores, to watch by the side of the sick and dying, with no hope of recompense or reward, only just because Christ loved them. He and his disciples would imitate the homeless Man of Sorrows whose wonderful story he was telling. With extraordinary rapidity the strange brotherhood grew in numbers, and city after city witnessed their advent, their work always lying in those poor, wretched quarters where the miserable masses dwelt.*

It was a new spirit which Francis introduced into the church. Hitherto the Benedictines and the many ramifications and offshoots of the Benedictine order, such as the Cluniac, the Cistercian, the Carthusian, had exercised everywhere almost supreme control in religious matters; and on the whole their influence had been wonderfully blessed in its work. But the Benedictine and the kindred orders generally by birth, always by education and sympathy, belonged to the upper classes. One of the articles of the famous Constitu-

* *Cf.* Sir James Stephen's Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography: "Francis of Assisi."

tions of Clarendon, in the time of king Henry II. (the Plantagenet), bears a curious undesigned testimony to this fact. "The

INNOCENT III. AND FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

king"—so runs the Clarendon article—"forbids the monks of England to receive into their societies, save under specially stringent conditions, anyone as monk or canon who belonged to the lower orders." But the new order which the seemingly half-crazed Francis of Assisi founded, and which soon covered England and the Continent with its network of colonies of preachers and teachers, belonged to and worked amongst the lowest and most despised class. It was the new state of things which came into being at this period—the marvellous and sudden growth of city life—which evoked the new spirit

that inspired Francis and his associates to undertake their noble work.

As early as 1216, when John was yet reigning, the new brotherhood held the first general chapter; and so great had their numbers already become, that it was found necessary to arrange for a special organisation in France, Germany, and Spain. Four years later—scarcely ten years after Francis had knelt at the feet of Innocent III., and extorted from the great prelate a reluctant blessing—the disciples of Francis met for their second general chapter, held in the fields round his native city of Assisi, in 1219. They numbered at this great meeting no less than five thousand. Homeless beggars they were; but cardinal Ugolino, who had been nominated by the reigning Pope, Honorius III., as their protector, when he gazed at the great assembly of these poor ragged preachers to the poor, and heard the story of their wondrous successes in many lands, and marked their fiery zeal, their serene confidence in their work, their devoted simple piety, tossing aside the insignia of his lofty rank, exclaimed: "Behold the camp of God!" Men were beginning to see that Francis and his followers were indeed taking the world by storm.

Five years after the general assembly at Assisi, or in the year 1224, they came to England. How could these foreigners, however, hope to work here? The tongue of the English poor was strange to them. But they came: just a tiny band, only numbering nine, of whom but three were English. They arrived amongst us in the humblest guise, quite friendless, absolutely penniless. This little party of friars made their first halt at Canterbury, the ancient seat of Roman Christianity in Britain, the scene of so many memorable events in the chronicle of the English church. But Canterbury, in all its long and eventful history, had never welcomed guests who were destined to play so great a part in the religious life of our island, as were those ragged disciples of the Italian Francis. The poor company split into two divisions, one remaining in the ancient church city, the other seeking a home in the not distant London.

The Canterbury friars were kindly but somewhat contemptuously housed by the monks of the priory of the Holy Trinity, the home allotted to them being a school-room, which they had to vacate by day while the boys of the school were being taught. The pleasant, gossipy memoir on "The Coming of the Friars Minor," written by a simple-minded and pious Franciscan who had shared in the early struggles and trials of the order in England, gives us a plain, unvarnished account of these devoted men in their poverty, when they were beginning their noble work, before the Franciscans had risen to power, before their order had become illustrious through the work of the eminent theologians and distinguished scholars who, curiously enough, at no distant date sprang from their ragged and illiterate company. Eccleston, in his small but picturesque memoir,* makes his poor friars live again; and we seem to see them, after their hard day's work among the dregs of the people, sitting round their fire in their bare and squalid refectory,

* *Cf.* "Monumenta Franciscana"—Thomas de Eccleston: "De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam." Edited by Mr. Brewer in the Rolls Series.

warming their thick sour beer, and trying to make it more palatable with water, and munching their coarse barley bread, as they told to one another their stories of the weary day's sorrows or successes.

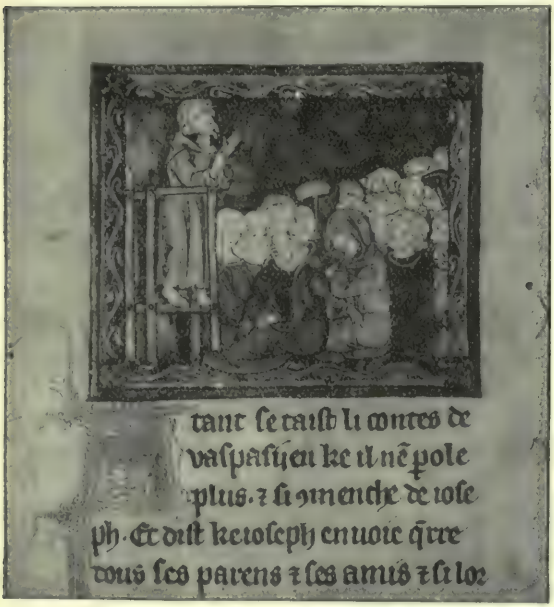
They always chose for their homes those low, swampy, and badly-drained quarters in cities, where the poorest and most neglected of the people congregated. In London, for instance, they built themselves little night cells or huts, first in Cornhill. Nothing but sheep-cotes were these cells—mere wattles, with mouldy hay or straw between them. Near Newgate, on a spot well called "Stinking Lane," subsequently rose the chief house of the order in England. Similar untempting settlements quickly followed in such centres as Oxford, Cambridge, and Norwich, but in all cases the poverty of the buildings corresponded with the dreary misery of the surrounding district. Decorations and ornaments of all kinds were zealously excluded even from their chapels and churches.

With the Franciscans of the early days, in the first half of the thirteenth century, this deliberate choice of the most rigid form of poverty was a religion. At Gloucester a friar was deprived of his hood for painting his pulpit; and the warden of the Gloucester house suffered a similar punishment for tolerating pictures in the community over which he presided. They were permitted to receive nothing in the way of gifts beyond the barest necessities of life—meal, salt, figs and apples, wood for firing, stale beer, or milk. In all weathers the disciples of the enthusiast of Assisi might be seen in the muddy streets and unpaved ways of the poor quarter of the city, barefooted and bareheaded, and leaving often the prints of their bleeding feet upon the ground, clad in gowns of the coarsest cloth, often ragged and torn.

Verily this was the Gospel preached to the poor by the poor! The sick, the fever-stricken, those afflicted by that most loathsome of diseases—leprosy, were especially the objects of the Franciscan's patient quest. The memorable scene of the beloved master, Francis, eating by choice out of the same dish with a leper so covered with ulcers that as the sufferer dipped his fingers in the dish and carried the morsels to his mouth, his blood dripped into the dish, was acted again and again in the lives of his disciples, who thus literally stormed the hearts of these forlorn and unhappy outcasts of society, for whom—living or dying—no man else seemed to care.

At first despised, if not ridiculed, the patient heroism of the Franciscans gradually made its way among the homes of men, and of men often very different from those amongst whom they worked and preached and toiled. In no country were the labours of these mendicant friars more successful than in England. The little band of nine poor brothers rapidly increased. Some jealousy was naturally excited among the monastic orders and among the regular priests of the church, especially owing to the attention they excited by their preaching, to which they gave especial care. They multiplied with extraordinary rapidity. Within thirty years after their arrival at Canterbury, the English Franciscans numbered 1,242; they possessed as many as forty-nine houses or convents, in cities widely separated like London, Oxford, Cambridge,

York, Hereford, Lynn, Norwich, Bridgewater, and Bristol. They passed into Ireland and Scotland, and everywhere were received with favour and not unfrequently with enthusiasm—an instance, it has been well said, of religious organisation and propagandism unexampled in the annals of the world.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A MENDICANT FRIAR PREACHING FROM A PORTABLE PULPIT.
(*From "The Romance of St. Graal," 14th Century. British Museum.*)

Nothing is more remarkable, however, in the story of the work and influence of the Franciscan order, than the marvellous and rapid change which passed over the friars in the matter of learning. Absolutely forbidden at first to use books, and even ink and parchment, in a few years we find the Franciscans famous among the learned men of Europe; the *English* Franciscans especially distinguished among these friar teachers and thinkers. Curiously enough, their beloved founder seems to have *hated* books, and proscribed learning of all kinds among his early disciples. He would have his followers like the poor, whose apostle he loved to consider himself, not in dress only, but in heart and understanding. Total poverty would ensure this; it would forbid the possession of books or any of the necessary materials of study. "Father," on one occasion said a novice to Francis, "it would be a great comfort to me to have a psalter; the minister-general permits it; still, I should not like to use it without your leave." The father evaded the request; a few days after, the novice asked him again. Then Francis with some heat replied: "When you have got a psalter, you will want a breviary. I am your breviary. . . . How much happier he who has made himself barren for the love of God!" Again after some days, perhaps wearied with the novice's importunities, he bade him use the psalter as the minister-general had given him leave. Then calling him back, kneeling before his young disciple, he exclaimed: "*Mea culpa, mea culpa!* whoever will be a friar minor must possess nothing besides his habit, or shoes if necessary."*

And yet, in spite of this early repugnance to books, even of the simplest, most every-day character, very soon the English Franciscans became the most learned body in Europe, and preserved their reputation for letters until the day came when Henry

* *Cf.* "Monumenta Franciscana."

VIII. swept them out of the land. In the course of the very reign which witnessed their coming to England, we find Robert Kilwarby, a Franciscan friar, on the archbishop's throne at Canterbury. We note Bonaventura, the general of the order, refusing the archbishopric of York, and Jerome of Ascoli, general after Bonaventura, elected Pope under the name of Nicholas IV. In the now famous and most learned order we come upon such names as Alexander Hales and Roger Bacon and Duns Scotus, who will ever rank among the most erudite and distinguished scholars of the Middle Ages. All of them were Franciscan friars!

ASSISI.

The truth was, the work which the Franciscan had set himself to do compelled him, at first perhaps against his will, to become a student. For something more had moved Francis of Assisi at the outset of his career, than the mere *spiritual* destitution of the crowded and neglected populations of the fast-growing cities of the thirteenth century. He saw, and his soul grieved over, the ever-recurring deadly sicknesses, the plague in its varied and terrible forms, fever and ague, and the awful scourge of leprosy. These he marked were ever making fearful havoc amidst the uncared-for, unloved masses who dwelt in the poor quarters of every important city. To these death came as a friend, while life under such dreary conditions was scarcely a boon. Alone in his generation, the eyes of the Italian enthusiast were opened to see and to pity with an immense pity the misery and agony of so many men and women and helpless children. Looking over the misery which existed in his day, Francis resolved to care for the health of the body equally as for the care of the soul. Hence, probably, the enormous influence of the friar, hence no doubt the

marvellous rapidity with which his famous order sprang into fame and power.

Strict and stern were the injunctions which Father Francis gave his pupils and followers to qualify themselves for an intelligent as well as for a loving attendance on the plague-stricken, the fever-smitten, and the leper; and well did his first disciples in all countries follow out their beloved master's charge as to the care of the sick. They studied the course of the many sicknesses, they watched and listened. Their whole life, devoted as it was to the relief of misery and poverty, constituted a perpetual object-lesson. They were ever learning, ever becoming more skilful; before the close of the century, which they so splendidly illustrated by their loving labours, the practice of medicine was literally engrossed by the friar. Was his popularity to be wondered at? Never in the annals of Christendom was the people's love more quickly won, more fairly earned.

For they were not only physicians of the body; they were patient and unwearied teachers, fervid and impassioned preachers. At first they were perfectly simple, possessing little theological knowledge besides an intimate knowledge of every phase and word of the Gospel narrative; but very early in their marvellous career their noble work among the dregs of the population brought them often into contact with the wealthier members of the city community, with men more or less trained to think, with men in whose hearts the more subtle heresies, so current in the early Middle Ages, had found a lodgment. The popular friar found that he had to meet in his sermon these doubters, inquirers, and sceptics. To be successful as a physician of the body, the Franciscan soon found a knowledge of medicine was absolutely necessary, and he set himself in good earnest to acquire this knowledge; to be really successful as a physician of the soul, he also at an early stage discovered that something more than a fervid enthusiasm was wanted. So the friar became a student, and the early injunctions of the founder were gradually forgotten or ignored.

To give a notable instance of this quick recognition of a need, we read in the story above quoted of the Franciscan Eccleston, how Agnellus, the first provincial of the order in England, persuaded master Robert Grosseteste of holy memory (afterwards the world-famed bishop of Lincoln, of whom some account has been given, but then a well-known teacher in the schools of Oxford) to read lectures to the brethren or friars who were located in the poor quarters of the fast-growing city of Oxford. Under Grosseteste the Oxford friars made unaccountable progress in sermons, and in subtle moralities suitable for preaching. The reputation of the English friars for learning, indeed, increased so rapidly, and their proficiency in study became so notorious in other lands, that the minister-general of the Franciscans positively sent for two of the English friar-community to read lectures in distant Lyons. Readers (teachers), says Eccleston—who, be it remembered, was an eye-witness of the events he so picturesquely and simply describes—were appointed by the heads of the order at Hereford, Leicester, Bristol, Cambridge, and Oxford, "and the gift of wisdom," to use his own words, "so overflowed in the province of England," that soon there were as many as thirty

Franciscan lecturers in England, and a regular succession of these was provided in the university. By the middle of the thirteenth century, strange to say, the predominance of the Franciscans over Oxford was notorious; at Cambridge, perhaps, their influence was less apparent, not because they were less numerous or less busy than at the sister university, but on account of there being no one of commanding genius and power at Cambridge like Robert Grosseteste, who guided the counsels of the Oxford Franciscans.

"For three hundred years, side by side with their brother mendicants of the order of St. Dominic, the friars were the evangelisers of the towns. When the spoliation of the religious houses was decided upon by king Henry VIII., the friars were the first upon whom the blow fell. But when their property came to be looked into, there was nothing to rob but the churches in which they worshipped, the libraries in which they studied, and the houses in which they passed their lives."* Richard Ingworth, suffragan of Dover, who was much employed in the king's work of suppressing the religious houses in the sixteenth century, bears repeated testimony to the deep poverty of the mendicant friars some three centuries after their great founder's death. Writing to lord Cromwell, he speaks thus of his experience in the north of England: "He had received for the king twenty-six houses of friars—the very poorest houses that ever he went to." The same story is told by the royal commissioner of the friars' establishments in other parts of England, as at Dunstable, Ware, and Walsingham. Writing of Scarborough, he says with some irony, "all that the king can expect to get is the lead off the roof and some poor chalices." The only exceptions were two or three of the greatest foundations at London and York, where some magnificence in the buildings and appointments had been introduced through the munificence of benefactors.*

We possess a remarkable testimony to the work and influence of the mendicant friars, the disciples of Francis, on England and her church during the early years of their settlement among us, in the Letters already referred to of Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln. This eminent and saintly man was an actual eye-witness of their doings in the first age of their fervour and zeal. Grosseteste himself was no ordinary man; during his lifetime he was the most honoured and revered among English churchmen, and for centuries after his death his fame lived as a great scholar and church administrator. On English thought and literature no one can be cited, in the reign of Henry III., who has exercised a greater influence than the famous bishop of Lincoln. His genius was universal. His own age acknowledged his great powers and profound scholarship and learning, and his age, be it remembered, was fertile in eminent men; it boasted such names as Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon. Grosseteste was, moreover, something more than a scholar and thinker. He was the friend and adviser, as we have already described him, of the great and powerful as of the poorest and humblest. His estimate of the friars

* Dr. Jessop: "The Coming of the Friars."

* *Cf.* Dr. Gasquet: "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," chap. vii.

may be gathered from the following extract from one of his letters written to Pope Gregory IX. :—"Your Holiness may be assured that in England inestimable benefits have been produced by the friars, for they illuminate the whole country with the light of their preaching and their learning. Their holy conversation excites vehemently to contempt of the world and to voluntary poverty, to the practice of humility in the highest ranks, to obedience to prelates and heads of the church, to patience in tribulation, to abstinence in plenty—in a word, to the practice of all virtues. If your Holiness could see with what devotion and humility the people run to hear the word of life from them, for confession and instruction in daily life, and how much improvement the clergy and the regulars have obtained by imitating them, you would indeed say that 'they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.'" Grosseteste writes in similar terms of the friars to Cardinal Raynald, afterwards Pope Alexander IV.*

This may be taken as a fair estimate, by a great contemporary, of the work done in England by the mendicant friars, especially of the order of St. Francis, during the first half century which followed their establishment among us.

The ideal friar, as dreamed of by Francis of Assisi, was an unspeakably noble conception; but not a few of his fervid disciples, especially in the earlier years which followed his death, fairly reached it. As time went on the ideal became lowered; corruptions crept in, discipline was often weakened, enthusiasm waned, the old burning love grew cold. It was the old story, told and retold so often of all human work. But the severest critic must grant, as he turns over the pages of the Franciscan story in England, that the effect of the self-denying labours of the disciples of Francis of Assisi on England and her church has been really great, and on the whole very beneficial. Their lives touched with love and pity the lives of thousands, who but for them would have died without knowledge of the Redeemer, or experience of the sympathy of their brother-men. There were verily thousands and tens of thousands for whom no man cared save the Franciscan—the mendicant friar. And when the crash of the Reformation came in the sixteenth century, the heartless policy of a general confiscation of the churches, the lands, and houses of the English religious, disclosed the deep poverty of the famous order. It was then seen how, during three hundred years of varying popularity in the wealthiest country of the western world, these men had "forgotten" to enrich themselves. Thus far, at least, they had been true to the old "poverty"-enjoining precepts of the loving enthusiast, whose memory they cherished as their father and founder.

The asceticism of the Franciscans was of a peculiar kind. While other religious orders multiplied the rules of abstinence, and seemed to consider that peculiar sanctity could only be obtained at the price of bitter mortification, the Franciscan retained only the ordinary vigils and fasts of the church. On other days the friar might eat flesh, and partake of any

* *Cf.* "Epistolæ Roberti Grossetesti," published in the Rolls Series

food or drink indifferently. His fasting, certainly in the earlier days, mainly consisted in his frequent difficulty to procure sleep, and drink, so that the body should have no occasion of complaining that it could not, through weakness or weariness,

ST. FRANCIS PREACHING TO THE BIRDS.

(From the picture by H. Stacy Marks, R.A., by permission of Angus Holden, Esq., M.P.)

any food or drink save of the coarsest and most repulsive kind. St. Francis taught that the body was created for the soul; and that the servant of God ought to eat, stand erect or pay attention to prayer. He was a constant advocate for cheerfulness, saying that it was the sign of a clean heart, and a great defence against the

devil. "Why," said he once to one of his disciples, "do you wear that sad and gloomy countenance because of your offences? It is enough that your sorrow should be known between you and your God."

The strange and regrettable innovation and development of the cult of the blessed Virgin—that special and saddest characteristic feature of mediæval Christianity, which we have already dwelt upon—received a still further impetus, owing to the enormous influence exercised over the masses of the people by the friars after the first quarter of the thirteenth century. The Virgin Mary occupied a peculiar and lofty position in Franciscan theology. The friars were essentially popular teachers. Bound (as were all the religious) to celibacy, they yet felt it their solemn and inescapable duty to exalt the pure family life of the world in which they moved, and which they hoped to purify and raise. So they warmly encouraged and promoted marriage among the people, believing, and rightly, that the hallowed tie was a true safeguard of purity. So in his preaching the friar insisted on the humanity of the Son of God, dwelling on His poverty and sufferings as man; while at the same time he exalted the position of woman by glorifying the Virgin Mary. He dwelt ever on her spotless purity, on her maternal authority and dignity. The Franciscan teaching loved ever to give greater prominence to the childhood than to the manhood of Christ; to lay greater stress on the parent, and, alas! too often to exalt the mother at the expense of the Son. This teaching, pressed home by the teachers they loved and honoured, sank deep into the hearts of the people of England, where the Franciscan exercised a peculiar and surpassing influence.

Men ask, what was this St. Francis who devised this mighty network of influences; who inspired his fellows with such a passion of self-devotion; who built up that great order which has done such noble work in past ages in our own England—an order which has survived denunciations, scoffs, taunts, scorn, even the follies of its own degenerate sons, and which, after six hundred years, still lives and is a powerful influence in our own day and time? It is difficult, of course, in the case of one so venerated, even worshipped, as St. Francis, to disentangle the true from the false in the many histories and memoirs of his life and work which have come down the stream of ages to our times. Round such beloved and venerated men, of course, legend and romance has thickly gathered; still, some of the real features of that strange character are preserved.

St. Bonaventura, a general of the Franciscan order, whose deep piety and unrivalled learning compel attention to any statement issuing from his pen, possessed rare facilities for estimating his character. Bonaventura, who must have often conversed with men who knew Francis of Assisi intimately, thus writes of the great founder of the order: "Who can form a conception of the fervour and the love of Francis, the friend of Christ? You would have said he was burnt up by divine love, like charcoal in the flames. As often as his thoughts were directed to the Divine love, he was excited as if the chords of his

soul had been touched by the plectrum of an inward voice."

Birds and insects to Francis were friends. He would caress and talk to them, and they would come to him all fearless, half forgiving him that he was a man and not one of themselves. Wild falcons fluttered round him. Timid animals would seek to attract rather than escape his notice. Half-frozen bees crawled to him in the winter time to be fed. He would talk to them as friend talks with friends. "My dear sisters," he was heard exclaiming to some starlings who fluttered and chattered round him, "you have talked long enough; it is my turn now. Listen to the word of your Creator, and be quiet." At another time, speaking as he was wont to such a feathered audience, he said: "My little brothers, you should love and praise the author of your being, who has clothed you with plumage and given you wings to fly where you will. You were the first created of all animals. He has given you the pure air for your dwelling-place. You sow not, neither do you reap, but all the time He watches over you. So give praise to your loving Creator." So great, indeed, was his devotion to the animal creation, that he would guard the very worms from injury.*

But his intense love and pity for the sad, the sick, and stricken, was his great absorbing passion. His strange love for the poor and miserable lepers, arose from his persuasion that these unhappy beings were the most wretched of all the children of men. These believed in him and in his power to help them. No man ever seems to have exercised such an overwhelming, irresistible attraction upon his fellows as did Francis. He was a poet and an orator, and, in addition to these rare gifts, possessed the power of a great organiser. He was ever haunted with the fear that his followers, whom he had inspired with something of his intense fervour and passion for self-sacrifice, would rapidly degenerate; and this dread made his whole nature intensely sorrowful. His marvellous successes appalled him, and often he would weep so long and so bitterly, that before his end his eyesight almost failed him.

Much of his life was passed in a kind of trance, in which celestial visitants appeared ever to hover round him; now in visible form, now he only heard the heavenly voices. Indeed, that life of his, which has exercised so enormous an influence on mankind, was a strange mixture. Though loving solitude, though realising perhaps more intensely than any other mortal ever did the beauty of the famous monkish motto, "*O beata solitudo, O sola beatitudo!*" ("O blissful solitude, O solitary bliss!"), he lived most of his busy existence amid squalid crowds in cities. The greatest, perhaps, of the mystics, he was one of the most practical of men, and has left behind him the most elaborate codes and canons for the government of his beloved order, drawn up with all the precision of a notary. In his temper he was to-day a playful child, on the next a gloomy and sorrowful anchoret. He would pass rapidly from a state of the darkest forebodings into a condition of more than human ecstasy. There appears to have been but little attraction in his

* *Cf.* Sir James Stephen's Essays: "Francis of Assisi."

Photo: Braun, Paris.

ST. FRANCIS RECEIVING THE STIGMATA.
(*From the picture by Giotto in the Louvre.*)

personal appearance. "There was no beauty" in that winning personality "that we should desire him." Francis was of short stature, his figure gaunt and wasted, his garments sombre and ragged, his face deeply furrowed with lines of care and thought, altogether a cheerless and unalluring image. Only his voice was ever sweet and singularly persuasive.

One remarkable feature in that wasted form must be noticed in this little picture of the great founder of the Franciscan order. There is an unwavering tradition that on that poor unlovely body were imprinted before he died the sacred marks of the Passion of the Saviour —on both hands and on the feet the dark marks deeply indented, of the nails by which our Crucified Lord was fastened to the Cross; and in the side the print of a spear-thrust. Eye-witnesses not a few in number, have left their record that they saw in life, and again after death, these wonderful Passion marks. The vision in the course of which these sacred symbols were said to have been imprinted on the body of Francis appears to have differed but slightly

from others which this enthusiast seems to have been often privileged to enjoy. Some two years before his death Francis had withdrawn himself for a brief season into the solitudes of Mount Alvernus, a wild tract of land on the summit of the Tuscan Apennines, where a little church had been erected. One night, at a short distance from the church, he chose to spend alone in prayer. As the sun was rising, before the eyes of the solitary watcher appeared a bright winged form, seemingly nailed to a cross. For a brief season Francis was sensible of a feeling of ecstatic joy, but the joy was mingled with the sharpest suffering. As the glorious vision faded, he perceived upon his body the Passion marks; upon his hands, his feet, his side the prints of the nails and the scar of the spear! These marks (*stigmata*) were

Photo: Alinari.

CHURCH OF ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS, NEAR ASSISI, BUILT AROUND THE ORIGINAL CHURCH IN WHICH ST. FRANCIS WORSHIPPED, WHICH HAS BEEN PRESERVED AND DECORATED AS SHOWN

indelible—he bore them the rest of his life. His friends tell us that they gazed on them with adoring reverence, as they laid their master in his coffin.*

No special legend attempts to glorify the last scenes of that life which has had so large an influence on succeeding generations. The two years during which Francis survived the trance of Mount Alvernus, in which—so runs the strange story—the "stigmata" were imprinted on his body, were a time of bodily suffering. He was comparatively young. But his life of incessant anxiety, of feverish solicitude for his suffering neighbours—and who was not neighbour to St. Francis of Assisi?—his long and continued fasts, his sleepless nights, had prematurely worn out that frail body. During the last months every care and attention that he would submit to was lavished upon him, for men had come to learn that in Francis, the half-crazy enthusiast, as some persisted in deeming him, the world possessed a true saint and a great leader of men.

When death was very near he asked to be removed from the bishop's palace at Assisi, where he had been long lying prostrated by weakness and mortal sickness, to the humble settlement of brothers which clustered round the little chapel of the Portiuncula (St. Mary of the Angels), where in former days he was in the habit of praying, where he dreamed many of his earlier dreams, and where he had seen some of his earlier visions—a spot which the dying Francis loved more than any sanctuary in the world. On his way thither he begged the bearers of his litter to stop and to lay him on the ground, and thence, stretching out his hand, he blessed his loved town of Assisi lying before him. A few more days of pain and suffering passed before the quiet, peaceful end came. In these closing hours he dictated his last wishes to his order, enjoining the brethren to receive neither churches nor lands, nor any gift which should infringe the original vow of the order to maintain for ever a holy poverty. Men, he wrote, might entertain them, but only as strangers and pilgrims.

When very near the end, surrounded by a group of his dearest friends, he said he would eat a last solemn repast with his brothers. There, in that poor hut under the shadow of the humble Portiuncula chapel, he broke his bread and distributed it, and thus, without an altar and without a priest, celebrated the Lord's Supper.* His last words breathed that divine love which had coloured his whole life—that intense love to men in which we must seek and find the secret of his vast power over the human heart. "See," he said, "God is calling me. I forgive all my brethren their sins and errors, and as far as lies in me, I absolve them. Tell them this, and bless them in my name."

The ashes of St. Francis rest at Assisi in a rough stone coffin, which lies in a chamber hewn out of the solid travertine rock. Over his grave, with extraordinary rapidity, his followers within a few years erected that stately basilica which, adorned by the hands of Cimabue and Giotto, challenges still the admiration of the Christian world. For more than six hundred years it has been visited by thousands of pious pilgrims, longing to

* *Cf.* Sabatier: "Vie de St. François d'Assisi"; and Milman: "Latin Christianity," bk. ix., ch. x.

* Sabatier: "Vie de St. François d'Assisi."

Photo: R. W. Thomas, Cheapside, E.C.

NORWICH CATHEDRAL, FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.

gaze on the tomb of the great master, wishful to look on the scenes once loved by Francis. Within two years of his death Rome inscribed him in her golden book of saints, and from that day, A.D. 1228, innumerable painters, many nameless, some bearing historic names like Fra Angelico, have ever surrounded the head of Francis with an aureole of divine glory. But the splendid and lordly church which marks his grave, the bright coronet of heavenly light which surrounds his head in a thousand pictures, the saintly title with which men in all lands choose to honour his memory, are sadly at variance with the ideal aimed at by the man, holy and humble of heart, whose only ambition was to be known as the comforter of the leper and the outcast, as the friend of the friendless, as the nameless founder of an order of poor and homeless men, who should tell the story of the Christ, ministering all the while to the wants of the sufferer, the oppressed, and the unhappy, whose hoarse cry of misery was going up day and night from the poor and neglected quarters of many a world-famed city, alike from Paris and London, Oxford and Bologna, Norwich and Lyons.

Side by side, and at the same time, with the Franciscans—well-nigh as numerous, with many of the same aims, with much of the same methods of working—arose another order of mendicant friars professing the same utter poverty, and powerfully influencing by their preaching and teaching all church and religious life in England. These were the followers of Dominic the Spaniard, an Augustinian canon of Osma, in Old Castille. Dominic, the founder of the world-famed order of friar preachers, appeared almost simultaneously with Francis of Assisi, in the early years of the thirteenth century. Before Dominic's death in the year 1221, western Christendom was covered with a host of zealous and devoted men, whose special function was popular instruction. The Dominicans were gathered from all lands, and were thus at home with every language and dialect, especially haunting the chief seats of learning—such as Bologna, Paris, Oxford, Cambridge—where these new and fervid teachers, constituting themselves the champions of a rigid, unswerving orthodoxy, soon obtained a vast influence.

Out of the mist of legend and unfortunate adulation, which in subsequent ages has surrounded the person of Dominic, we are able to catch sight of some of the influences which helped to mould the character of one of the greatest of mediæval reformers. The dominant thought in Dominic's mind in early and middle life was the restoration of a purer faith in the southern lands, especially in Provence and Languedoc. Strange Oriental heresies, brought into Europe by the constant passing and repassing of the Crusading host, had seriously affected the Christian faith and teaching, especially in these southern countries. There was, especially, a curious and general revival of an ancient Eastern heresy, known as Manichæism, the chief characteristic features of which were belief in two co-equal conflicting principles of good and evil, the implacable hostility of matter to spirit, an aversion to the Old Testament as the work of a spirit hostile to God. To these false doctrines was

added one of yet greater danger to the Christian faith: these heretics denied the reality of the suffering Christ, thus reviving an old and frequently condemned teaching. The result of the popularity of this revival of old heresies in the cultured lands of the south of France, was that through France —and, indeed, through all Christendom— unbelief was spreading with alarming rapidity. In addition to these wild beliefs, a widely-spread antagonism to sacerdotal claims existed. This antagonism had largely increased with the revival, power, and influence of the Papacy; hatred to the ever-growing pretensions of Rome had much to do with this hostility to hierarchical authority. There is no doubt that at the beginning of the thirteenth century there was much disorder in faith and practice, especially among the highly cultured provinces of southern France. Raymond VI., count of Toulouse, a powerful and influential prince, but whose character was dissolute and pleasure-loving, had constituted himself the patron and upholder of these dissenters from the ancient faith of Christendom.

For years Dominic's mission in life was to combat these false beliefs, these rebellions against obedience to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. He promoted the establishment of seminaries for the better education of the youth of both sexes, and he founded one or more religious teaching houses under the obedience of the Augustinian order to which he himself belonged. Pressing on the church the necessity of a more careful attention to preaching, he carried on with unremitting perseverance what he considered his life-work of witness for Catholic truth, in opposition to the desolating heresies growing up thickly around him. Later panegyrists have endeavoured to connect his name closely with the dark atrocities of the Albigensian war, so called from the fact of the chief seat of the heretics being in the city of Albi—a war in which politics and greed, alas! were inextricably mixed up with the defence of the Catholic faith. In these terrible wars Dominic, as the champion of Catholic truth, is represented by many as marching in the van of the armies opposing the heretic Raymond of Toulouse, with the cross in his hands, a cross which was afterwards shown riddled with deadly arrows and missiles, only the form of the Saviour hanging on it remaining uninjured. But later historians are silent on this point, and indeed there is nothing in contemporary history which connects the great preacher with the dark acts of the Albigensian wars.*

In fact, Dominic's fame and reputation grew very slowly during many years. Even Pope Innocent III. seems to have given to the fervid preacher but scant encouragement, save that he, shortly before his death, gave his sanction to a "house," which was virtually the mother house of the Dominican order—St. Ronain at Toulouse. This famous Pope failed to perceive in the Augustinian canon the mighty powers which eventually showed themselves so conspicuously in his work. It was not until the year 1217 that Dominic became a conspicuous figure in the history of the church. Years of preparation and quiet persevering enthusiasm had qualified him for the famous pulpit work at Rome, where

* Milman: "Latin Christianity," book ix., chap. ix. Also Excursus C at end of volume.

ST. FRANCIS DYING, BLESSES THE TOWN OF ASSISI.

(From the picture by François Léon Benouville, in the Louvre.)

Photo: Braun, Paris

he now took up his residence. There, where Honorius III. had succeeded Innocent III., Dominic rapidly gained a vast reputation. His surpassing eloquence, his great learning, his burning enthusiasm, at once attracted the attention of the Pope, and the preaching friar became rapidly a great power at Rome. It seems about this time that the little order founded by the great orator took a new departure. Probably the growing success of the Franciscans suggested it. At all events, the disciples of Dominic henceforth made a formal profession of poverty; and the complete renunciation of all means of support, save such as might be offered day by day, became a part of the Dominican rule.

Both these men, Dominic and Francis, had in their patient enthusiasm laid their hands on a real need—an actual want in the church. Francis discovered the neglected "masses" in the growing mediæval towns and cities, the uncared-for, unshepherded town populations. Dominic found out that preaching—earnest, instructive, passionate preaching—was lacking in mediæval Christendom. These men were sorely *wanted*—hence their marvellous success. In less than seven years after he had begun to preach at Rome, Dominic's little "preaching order" had spread over well-nigh the whole of Europe. Dominican houses began to spring up with amazing rapidity in all lands.

It was not until the year of his death, in 1221, that the new order arrived in England, just three years before the coming of the Franciscans. Prior Gilbert landed with fourteen friars, and preached before the aged primate who played so distinguished a part in the great struggle for freedom in king John's days—Stephen Langton. The archbishop was struck with the fervour and eloquence of the strangers, and gave them full licence to preach throughout the land. Monasteries of the new order of preaching friars rose at once at Canterbury, London, and Oxford. Two or three years later we hear of them receiving hospitably and aiding their brother mendicants of St. Francis's order, but, so far as England is concerned, we possess no more details as to the Dominican work among us for many years. All we know of the Dominican in England in the first days is, that wherever the Franciscan settled, usually in the same place was a Dominican house, whose friars rather addressed themselves to the cultured classes, while the Franciscan laboured among the poorest of the people; but after a comparatively brief season the two orders equally shared in the possession of the most learned and cultured men in Europe.

In England the Dominicans, though never attaining the same great popularity or anything like the same influence and hold upon the people's affection as their brethren the Franciscan friars, were numerically not far behind them, and very soon after their first arrival no considerable town in England was without a Franciscan and Dominican settlement. The rivalry between the two orders only began at a later period. Doctrinally, at least at first, there was a striking likeness in the teaching of Dominic and Francis. They were both devoted adherents of the Roman supremacy. It is strange that both Dominic and Francis, in the first instance, were coldly received by the reigning Pope, the

great Innocent III., and it was only after careful thought that Papal encouragement was finally given to their mighty conception. It is true that before his death Innocent III., and to a still greater degree his successor, Honorius III., began to be conscious of the strength and irresistible influence of the mendicant orders; but neither of these eminent Popes guessed *what* these two great standing armies in every country of Europe would, in time to come, be to the Papacy. The Dominican and Franciscan are said, and with truth, to have perpetuated, or at least to have immeasurably strengthened the enormous pretensions of Rome, for more than two centuries after their foundation. This reflection—true on the continent of Europe—is peculiarly applicable in England, where the influence of the mendicant friars endured until the Reformation.

Like their Franciscan brothers, the Dominicans professed the deepest reverence for the blessed Virgin, who was regarded as the special protectress of the order. Their raptures of spiritual adulation seem to our truer and more scriptural estimation of her, who was indeed "blessed among women," as bordering on wild profanation. To Dominic, who considered himself as the adopted son of Mary, is ascribed the composition of the famous "Rosary"—that strange litany with the refrain "Ave Maria" (Hail Mary) repeated again and again—a form of prayer which has maintained in Roman Catholic countries its wonderful popularity to our own days and times, and which has done more to perpetuate the cult of the so-called Queen of Heaven among the people than all the rhapsodies of mystics, or learned treatises of doctors, or authoritative pronouncements of the Roman see.

One great source of strength of the two great mendicant orders, Dominican and Franciscan, was the establishment of a third, a wider and more secular community, known as the "Tertiaries," consisting of men and women bound by no vows. These were well-wishers of the famous orders, and were taught to observe all holy days, fasts, and vigils; were trained to constant prayer and attendance at divine worship, especially in churches served by the Franciscans and Dominicans. By this means the orders secured everywhere a vast host of devoted followers of both sexes, wedded to their interests. These Tertiaries, Brethren of Penitence, as they were called among the Franciscans, or soldiers of Jesus Christ, as they were called among the Dominicans, by no means secluded from the world, its cares and interests, influenced widely and powerfully all sorts and conditions of men. This secular order of Tertiaries received eventually the formal sanction of Rome.

Under the fourth general of the order, John of Wildeshausen, in Westphalia, a chapter-general was held at Bordeaux. The Dominicans at that great meeting reckoned their monasteries or communities to number 470. They were thus divided: in Spain, 35; in France, 52; in Germany, 52; in Tuscany, 32; in Lombardy, 46; in Hungary, 30; in Poland, 36; in Denmark, 28; in England, 40; besides many in eastern lands. The popularity and influence of these mendicant friars, although inferior to that enjoyed by the Franciscans, was perhaps greater in England than in any other country.

Like his yet greater companion in the work of devising and founding the mendicant orders, who were destined to play so great a part henceforth in the Church of England and on the Continent, Dominic died comparatively early. He was only fifty-two years old when he was attacked by the fever and dysentery to which he quickly succumbed — his emaciated and worn-out body offering little resistance to the fatal malady. His end was a quiet and holy one. "Weep not," said the dying Dominic to his sorrowing friends; "I shall be able to help you better in the place whither I am going, than I could hope to do were I to remain with you." Without pomp or state, with no attempt to embalm his body, they laid him in a grave in the old church of St. Nicholas at Bologna, raising no monument, but allowing the feet of the brethren of his order to press the gravestone of their great founder. This was one of his last requests.

But the humble sepulture was soon exchanged for one more suitable, men thought, to so eminent a saint. Twelve years after his death, in the presence of a vast crowd of distinguished ecclesiastics, the coffin of Dominic was exhumed and opened. No special miracle of the preservation of the sacred body was recorded—the bones only of Dominic were found; a sweet smell which the bystanders noticed was the only outward sign of the sanctity of the remains. The coffin has been since twice unsealed, the last time in the year 1383, when the skull was taken out and deposited in a silver urn, which was placed in a separate chapel for the veneration of the countless pilgrims to his shrine. A great monument, richly adorned with sculpture by the most illustrious artists of the thirteenth century and later, guards the vault where the mouldering bones of the founder of the famous Dominican order repose. They have not been seen since the year 1383.

Art has, of course, idealised St. Dominic. He possessed a wonderful charm, which enabled him to influence so many of his contemporaries of all ranks and orders, from the magnificent prelate who reigned from the Vatican over the churches of the west, down to the humble and unknown scholar of English Oxford or Italian Bologna—a charm which has endured, though centuries have passed since he talked and worked with men. This charm painters have again and again tried to represent with glory aureoles and features of superhuman beauty. The real Dominic seems to have had a person of about the middle height, with fair hair and beard; his form was attenuated. His wonderful powers as an orator were aided by an impressive and ringing voice. Very different from St. Francis, Dominic in the latter part of his wonderful career made himself acceptable to the Papal court, and was invested with an office at Rome which has been ever held by his successors in the order—that of "master of the sacred palace." The most eloquent preacher of this century, Henri Dominique Lacordaire, was a Dominican; and the fact that the great pulpits of Roman Catholic Christendom are still so often filled with brothers of the famous order, tells that the work of St. Dominic, the founder of the preaching friars, has been an enduring one.

Later tradition has ever associated him with the dread tribunal of the Inquisition,

Photo: Alinari, Florence.

THE CHAPEL OF ST. DOMINIC, BOLOGNA.

with all its tremendous and terrible agencies; but it is more than doubtful if that unhappy title to honour really belongs to him. The tribunal of the Inquisition, with its far-reaching powers, was not placed in the hands of the Dominican friars, until some years after the death of St. Dominic, founder of the order.* Indeed, his character, as painted by his friend and companion, St. Jourdain de Saxe, is far from according with the stern and ruthless Inquisitor of the later biographers. St. Jourdain describes him as a loving and devoted man, as one who through love had discovered the secret of the key of hearts. His days he devoted to his neighbours, his nights he gave to God. Rest at night was with him a rare thing. The hours generally devoted to repose he usually passed in a church; when spent with fatigue, he would sleep for a brief space before the altar where he used to pray. It is hard to believe that such a loving and devoted man ever approved, much less shared in, the work of that awful tribunal of the Inquisition, with which, after his death, the members of his order were so intimately associated.*

ST. DOMINIC.
(*From the picture by Giovanni Bellini in the National Gallery.*)

The mendicant friars, who for the three hundred years preceding the Reformation occupied so prominent a place in the Church of England as teachers, preachers, and confessors, comprised ultimately several orders; of these the Franciscans and Dominicans, certain chapters in whose story we have just been dwelling upon, were by far the most influential and the most numerous.

The *Franciscans* need not be further described. They were also known among us as "grey friars," from the colour of their habit; "minores" or "minorites,"

* See Excursus C at end of volume.

* *Cf.* generally Lacordaire: "Vie de St. Dominique."

as the youngest and, in the eyes of their saintly founder, the humblest of the religious foundations. "Our Francis" says: "minores minimis sumus."

The *Dominicans*, or "black friars," were usually known as friars preachers. This title, which well summarises their especial work, is generally referred to an expression used by the Pope, who on some occasion, writing to Dominic, gave this instruction to his notary: "Write to Dominic, the preaching brother."

The *Augustinians*, or "Austin friars," were made up of many small communities, who lived under no recognised rule, but were brought under one obedience by Pope Alexander IV. These mendicant friars took root in England some years later than the Franciscans, but never obtained the power and influence won by the two great orders founded by Dominic and Francis.

The *Carmelites*, called in England the "white friars," traditionally belonged to a community of hermits, settled on Mount Carmel, who professed to date back to the times of Elijah the prophet. A Sir John de Vesci, on his return from the holy wars, introduced a little company of these mendicant friars into England, where they soon took root during the early days of the teaching and influence of the Dominicans and Franciscans. They attained to a certain popularity in this country, and are usually reckoned as the fourth of the orders of mendicant friars. But, as compared with the followers of Dominic and Francis, they were insignificant in numbers as in weight. The Carmelites, like the two greater orders, were distinguished for their special devotion to the Virgin Mary, whom they considered the protectress of their community. Pope Honorius III. directed they should be styled "the family of the most blessed Virgin Mary." Hence, in all the convents of the order the Virgin, under her title of Madonna del Carmine, holds a conspicuous place.

The numbers of the mendicant orders *in England* at the epoch of the Reformation—A.D. 1536–1540, when they were suppressed, after three hundred years of existence—were, roughly, about 1,800 to 1,900 in all, and they were thus divided:—

	Franciscan.	Dominican.	Austin.	Carmelite.
No. of houses	60	53	42	36
No. of friars	660	472	378	288

When these numbers are considered by the reader, the small numbers of the whole population of England, as remarked upon another occasion, must always be carefully taken into account.*

* *Cf.* Dr. Gasquet: "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," chap. vii.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

Apparent Increase of the Church's Power and Influence—Elements of this Influence—Encroachments of Rome in the Reigns of John and Henry III.—Consequent Irritation and Resistance in England—Edward I.—Confiscates Half the Church's Revenue—His Anti-Ecclesiastical Legislation against Mortmain and Immunity of the Clergy—His Parliament—Growing Jealousy of the Friars—Great Churchmen of this Period—Inner Life of the Church—Notes of Synods and Councils.

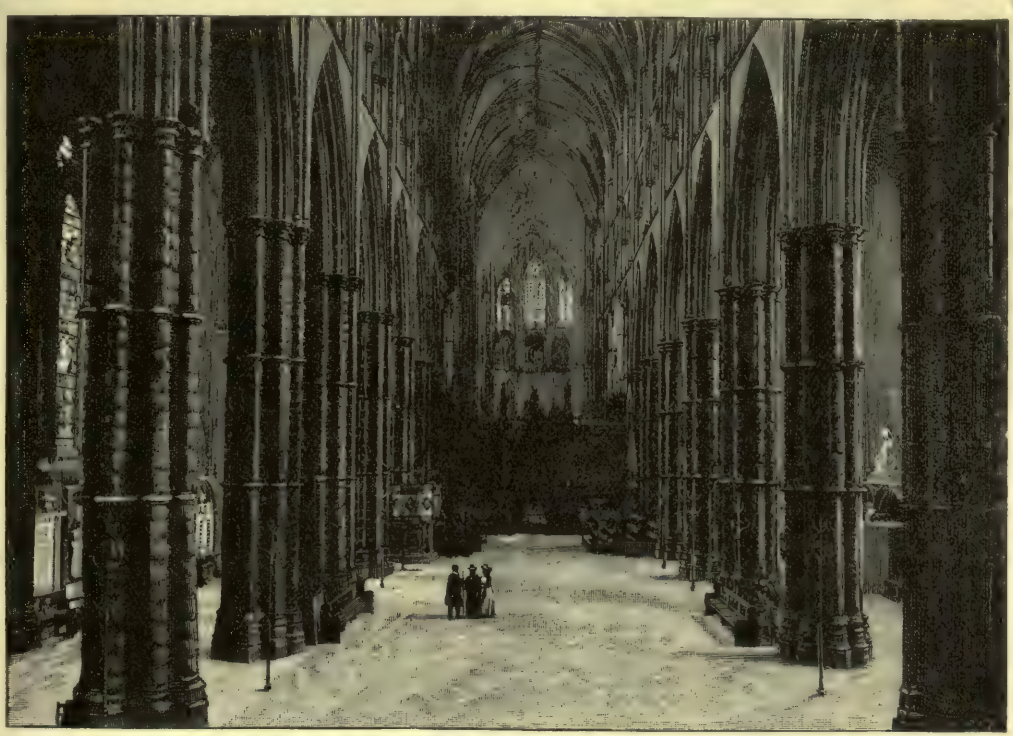
IN the earlier years of the thirteenth century it would have seemed to any thoughtful onlooker that the church during the two preceding centuries had made continuous and stately progress. The character of the Papacy had been restored, and its power and influence enormously augmented. It acted as a centre to the whole western church. A succession of distinguished and most able Popes in the course of these two centuries had sat on the throne of St. Peter. The monastic system had been revived, purified, and vastly augmented by the foundation of innumerable communities. In this general church revival England had borne a distinguished part. The Church of England during the reigns of the Norman and Plantagenet kings had occupied a peculiarly influential position. The ministers and advisers of the sovereigns from the days of Edward the Confessor to the time of Henry III. had been, in the great majority of cases, chosen from the ranks of churchmen.

In learning, the church reigned absolutely supreme. The universities and the schools belonged to her. The ecclesiastics were the canon lawyers and, as far as it was known or in use, the teachers and professors of the civil law. They were almost the only historians and poets—less distinguished in medicine and in physical science. It was the glory of the Franciscan order in the thirteenth century that they applied themselves to this special study, their work among the poor and neglected of the people especially suggesting the necessity of some proficiency in the healing art.

The wealth of the Church of England at this period of its history was enormous. We have already noticed how powerful an influence the Crusading wars had been in augmenting the possessions of ecclesiastics, and more or less these possessions had been free, or partially free, from contributing to the burdens of the state. Large portions of this wealth were yearly spent with generous prodigality upon the stately cathedrals, the abbey-churches, and the monastic buildings which arose in such numbers and often with such stately magnificence during this period. Indeed, the vast possessions of the Church of England, ever on the increase, became now, in the opinion of statesmen, a source of positive danger to the realm. To limit this rapidly growing wealth, statutes such as "mortmain" were passed and became

law, as a national protest against the perpetual encroachment of the church on the landed property of the kingdom.

The power of the church in England had vastly increased in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was no longer an insular communion, with its interests and life mainly confined to the island. Since the coming of William the Conqueror, it was not merely intimately bound up with the state in its own country, but it now formed part of the great widespread Latin communion. This was a comparatively novel feature, and herein the mediæval Church of England in the times of the Norman and Angevin kings differed from the Anglo-Saxon church, which had little or nothing to do with the head of western Christendom, the bishop of Rome, or indeed with any of the Continental churches of the west. There was in this mediæval church a wonderful solidarity, which gave a strange power to each separate national church like the Church of England. "The clergy, including the monks and friars, were one throughout Latin Christendom. Whatever antagonism, feud, hatred, estrangement might rise between rival prelates and rival orders, whatever irreconcilable jealousy might arise between the seculars (the parish priests) and the regulars (members or the monastic orders), yet the caste seldom betrayed the interests of the



THE NAVE, WESTMINSTER (LOOKING EAST), BUILT IN THE 13TH AND 14TH CENTURIES.

caste. The high-minded patriot-churchman who regarded his country more than the church was not common. The clergy in general (there were noble exceptions) were first the subjects of the Pope, then the—but only in the second place—subjects of the temporal sovereign. The allegiance of the hierarchy to the church was at once compulsory and voluntary. The Pope's awful powers held in check the constant inevitable tendency to rebellion and contumacy. The Papal legate, the pro-consul of the Pope, the co-ruler with the king, when he came to England, was not dependent on the reception of a cold or a hostile court. He could almost command, rarely did not receive, the unlimited homage of the clergy. To him was due their first obedience."*

This great Latin church, which extended from Scotland to the Spanish frontier of Christendom, from the Atlantic Ocean which washed the long western shores of France to the eastern boundary of Germany, had one common language. In their intercourse with each other the clergy needed no interpreter. Their Latin tongue was not only the language of their solemn ritual, but it was the one language current throughout Europe, the language of treaties and of negotiations between kingdom and kingdom. It was the one language, too, of European law.

This mediæval church, in theory at least, was moreover subject to one universal custom, the "rule of celibacy." The mediæval churchman had no home-life, no family, no country. Independent of all human ties and affections, his hopes and fears, his loyalty and allegiance belonged alone to the church; and the church meant, not the Church of England, but the great Latin communion, whose centre was not Canterbury, but Rome. Human nature again and again protested against this stern and unnatural regulation. But we find the greatest among the Popes, the most famous of their legates, the foremost among churchmen of every land, again and again insisting upon the observance of this iron rule. It has been well termed the "palladium" of the church's power. Latin (Roman) Christianity has again and again resolutely refused to change or to modify the rule. Nor will it ever do so.

Among the various causes which in England led to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, this existence of a kingdom within a kingdom, this permanent settlement in our midst of a powerful caste, bound by the most solemn obligations to a foreign, and not unfrequently a hostile power, must be reckoned among the more far-reaching. If a question arose respecting conflicting claims to obedience, the English ecclesiastic in the vast majority of instances would obey the orders of Rome, and not the will of the king and Parliament of England. No patriotic English statesman, were he ever so religious and God-fearing, could brook such a state of things, which constituted an ever-present and grave danger to the country he loved so well.

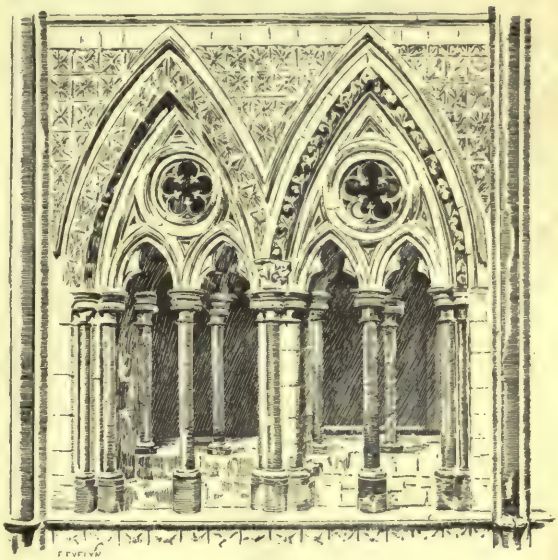
While the mediæval Latin church of the thirteenth century, of which, be it remembered, the Church of England was a devoted and obedient member, recognised in its powerful outward framework one supreme

* Milman: "Latin Christianity," book xiv., chap. i.

head on earth—the Pope; one sacred capital—Rome; one universal language for its ritual and intercourse—the Latin tongue; one caste—the clergy, including monk and friar, parish priest and prelate; and ignoring all class distinction, enforcing one stern law—celibacy; it claimed besides—a claim, too, generally recognised and acknowledged—an awful secret power. In its hands, so taught this great Latin church, were the keys which irrevocably opened or closed to men the gates of the kingdom of heaven. The eternal destiny of every man depended on the will of the priest. He could bind or loose. He could acquit, absolve, free the soul from any contracted guilt, however deep. He could send the soul of the man who in his eyes remained unrepentant, to a hopeless doom.

The power of the priest of the mediæval Church of England, besides this somewhat vague though tremendous authority reaching into a timeless eternity, became more definite, and hence more striking, as the doctrine of a purgatory for the departed soul was gradually developed. The priest, by his prayers and masses, claimed to be able to assist the departed soul in that place of probation, perhaps of punishment, whither at first all men after death were relegated. The life there might be sweetened; the duration of the purgatorial probation might assuredly be shortened, by the prayers which were said and the masses which were celebrated at the altars of the church. What probably at first was a pious hope, was gradually taught to be a certainty; and before the fourteenth century had run half of its course, the fatal doctrine of indulgences had roused the indignation of many thinking men, and prepared the way for the Reformation with its momentous and drastic changes.*

Very tremendous were the powers long claimed, but only formally asserted in the fourth Lateran council, held by Pope Innocent III. in 1215, at which council Stephen Langton, the patriot archbishop of Canterbury, was present. Transubstantiation, in all its dread mystery and consequences, was authoritatively proclaimed to be a doctrine of the Catholic Church. For every priest, ministering at the high altar of a lordly cathedral or at the humble altar of a village church, was claimed the power—one



EARLY ENGLISH TRIFORIUM ARCH, WESTMINSTER ABBEY, BUILT IN THE REIGN OF HENRY III.

* *Cf.* Milman: "Latin Christianity," book xiv., chap. i.

trembles at the statement—of *making God.** Confession also, which by a decree of the same Lateran Council under Innocent III. was made an universal, obligatory, indispensable duty, laid bare to the priest of the Latin church the heart of everyone, from the sovereign on the throne to the peasant in the field. We have already seen the desolating effect upon a whole people of those formidable anathemas which the Pope, who claimed this awful power over the nation as over the individual, ever kept in readiness to launch against a people or a prince presuming to act in opposition to his sovereign will. The interdict, which might and sometimes did continue for the space of several years, virtually suspended the performance of all religious rites, even of the most solemn, thus placing an entire people outside the pale of Christendom. The excommunication, even more desolating in its effects, separated the hapless individual thus placed under the ban of the Catholic Church, from all the offices of religion. Should the offender happen to die while under this sweeping curse, for *his* soul even the most pitiful of men was forbidden to hope or even to pray!

Yet, in spite of defilements which kept ever creeping into it, but which all felt to be alien to it; in spite of doctrinal errors which ever kept distorting its higher teaching—errors which, as its noblest spirits were conscious, issued from the poor human heart seeking an easier path to heaven than the rugged road pointed out by Christ—the mediæval church, the church of Latin Christianity, with its unnumbered army of "religious," with its vast machinery of abbeys and churches, monasteries and schools, all through those centuries of confusion, conquest, rapine, and selfish greed, stood out, upon the whole, as the great bulwark of the oppressed against high-handed tyranny; acted as the one monitor to whom the great and powerful chose to listen, and often to obey. In spite of all, the Latin (Roman) church was the salt which preserved society during this iron age from hopeless corruption and irretrievable decay.

King Edward I. died in 1307. The whole of the preceding century had been taken up with the three reigns of John, of his son and grandson, Henry III. and Edward I. For the first sixteen disastrous years in English story, John Lackland was king. The granting of Magna Carta was the great constitutional event of the reign; and the large share in that transaction borne by archbishop Langton, supported by the Church of England, has been already dwelt upon. The event, however, in that sinister life of John's which most closely affected the church, was the infamous submission of the king to the Pope, and the acknowledgment that he held his kingdom as a vassal of the bishop of Rome. This gave an enormous impulse to the ever-growing Papal encroachments; and the work of the Church of England during the thirteenth and two following centuries was gravely impeded by the perpetual interference and measureless claims and exactions of Rome.

The reign of Henry III. (A.D. 1216–1272), which witnessed the coming among us of the mendicant friar, was a period especially notable for a steady advance of encroach-

* *Cf.* Milman's "Latin Christianity," book vii., chap. ii.; book viii., chap. iii.; and book xiv., chap. i.

ments on the part of Rome on the rights and liberties of the English church. There was ever a succession of haughty Papal ambassadors. The right of appointing to bishoprics, even to the arch-see of Canterbury in several notable instances,

A MEDIÆVAL BISHOP.

(*By permission from the picture by Sir John Gilbert, R.A., P.R.W.S., in the Guildhall Art Gallery.*)

legates coming and going, claiming rank and authority superior to that possessed by the English primate and his suffragans. Great sums of money were being constantly demanded, and usually paid by the Church of England, through these imperious Roman was claimed and exercised by the Italian Pontiff. The richest and most desirable benefices were filled up by the same foreign intruder, and frequently the scandal was perpetrated of forcing a foreigner, who might or might not reside on his cure or

in his cathedral city, into these livings or prebends. Foreign abbots and priors were often chosen for the English religious houses. The Pope claimed and often exercised, during this period, a constant right of interference with all the affairs of the Church of England. A steady flow of appeals to Rome also kept on increasing.

All this produced a feeling of intense irritation, among ecclesiastics as well as among laymen; and the name of Rome grew more and more hateful to Englishmen as the thirteenth century advanced. Of course, the extraordinary act of submission of king John to Pope Innocent III., the formal admission of vassalage on the part of a king of England to a Pope, gave to all these Papal exactions and assumptions of supreme authority, an enormous impetus. The court of Rome persisted in regarding England during the long reign of Henry III. as positively a subject state. Men like Grosseteste of Lincoln, although very loyal adherents of Rome, indignantly protested against these unheard-of and monstrous claims of the Pope and his legates, and frequently resisted (though generally the resistance was overcome), complying with the perpetual and excessive demands for money which Rome was ever making upon the wealthy Church of England. At the council of Lyons, held under Innocent IV. in 1245, Roger Bigod and others representing the realm of England made a direct demand for some relaxation of this oppressive Roman tyranny, and even endeavoured to repudiate the disgraceful submission of king John, but their righteous demand was rejected. "This period of the history of the Church of England (when the oppression of Rome was at its height) was dismal indeed, but the sum of grievances was mounting so high that they must compel their own remedy, and men were growing up with a sense of injury that must sooner or later provide its vindication."*

As examples of the imperious behaviour of the Pope, in A.D. 1274, on a vacancy occurring, the Pope nominated Robert Kilwardby, a Dominican friar, to the archbishopric of Canterbury; and in the year 1278, when Kilwardby accepted the offer of cardinal, and left England to take his place among the Papal counsellors, thus vacating the primacy, the Pope, without opposition, procured the election of John Peckham, a Franciscan friar, in his room.

EFFIGY OF HENRY III.
(*From his Tomb in Westminster Abbey.*)

* Stubbs: "Constitutional History," chap. xix.

Henry III. has been well described as "accomplished, refined, liberal, magnificent, rash rather than brave, impulsive and ambitious, pious, and in an ordinary sense virtuous, but at the same time utterly devoid of all elements of greatness." His foolish and impolitic preference for foreigners was one of the chief grievances which led to the rebellion of the barons under Simon de Montfort. His nomination of his wife's uncle, Boniface, son of the count of Savoy, to the archbishopric of Canterbury was a notable instance of Henry III.'s usual policy. It was a disastrous appointment for the Church of England. Boniface held the primacy for some twenty-five years (1245 to 1270). During much of this period the archbishop was out of England—one of his absences, for instance, lasted four years. The great revenues of the see were squandered abroad, Boniface caring nothing for the duties and responsibilities of his great office.

The third of the kings of England of the thirteenth century, Edward I., "inherited to the full the Plantagenet love of power, and he possessed in the highest degree the great qualities and manifold accomplishments of his race."* In an age when to oppose Rome was a difficult and a dangerous task, he steadily resisted her exorbitant and ruinous pretensions, protecting the Church of England from the grave dangers to which these pretensions exposed her. And in a great measure he succeeded in loosing the fatal bonds in which the evil conduct of his grandfather, John, had involved her, and all this without separating himself from the outward communion of the Church Catholic. A far-seeing organiser, a wise and thoughtful legislator, distinguished equally in the field as in the cabinet, his military successes in Scotland and Wales laid the foundation of the future unity, and consequently of the after-greatness, of the country he loved so well, while his laws were the basis of all subsequent English legislation. His idea of a parliament—a real national assembly—which he partly carried out, still remains the model of representative institutions at the present day, although nigh six centuries have passed since his remains were laid in that solemn, sacred chapel of the kings in the storied abbey loved of Englishmen, in that plain tomb, stately and massive, upon which so many generations of his countrymen have gazed with admiration mingled with awe.

Early in his reign, in A.D. 1279, king Edward I. determined that the Church of England as a national church should join in bearing the national burdens. As a result of this legislature on church responsibilities, on several occasions during the first twenty years of Edward's reign, the clergy with more or less willingness granted the king towards his many varied expenses, mostly connected with his constant military expeditions, large subsidies of different amounts. These royal demands, however, in the year 1294 reached their culminating point; when the king peremptorily demanded from the clergy, towards the cost of his war with France, the largest exaction, perhaps, ever pressed for under the shadow of the law by an imperious monarch. On this occasion,

* Stubbs: "Constit. Hist. of England."

after some delay on the part of the church in complying with the ever-growing demands of the sovereign, Edward impatiently seized all the coined money and treasure in the sacristies of the monasteries and cathedrals, and then, dissatisfied with the amount subsequently offered by the clergy as their share of the national expenses, harshly informed them that they must be prepared to pay him *half their entire revenue* or be outlawed. The clergy were dismayed and terrified; the dean of St. Paul's is said to have died of fright in the king's presence; representatives of the church endeavoured to temporise; but the arbitrary sovereign insisted, and eventually the harassed church was compelled to submit.*

There does not appear to have been any special hostility to the church in the policy of king Edward I.; but in that iron age a great king was naturally a despot, and the Plantagenet ruler, looking round in his needs, which were many, saw the wealth of the church, and considered (with some justice) that the powerful and rich ecclesiastical estate was not bearing its due share of state burdens. But, taking everything into consideration, Edward's admirers and apologists can scarcely plead with any fairness that the exorbitant demand on the church for half her revenue in the year 1294 was either just or upright.

More equitable and patriotic, however, was the famous statute of Edward I., which became part of the law of the land in 1279, usually quoted as "*De religiosis*," which forbids the acquisition of land by the religious or others, in such wise that the land should come into "mortmain." The king and other lords were daily losing the services due to them by the granting of estates to persons or institutions incapable of fulfilling legal obligations. Such endowments, bestowed by will or otherwise upon monasteries and ecclesiastical bodies were, indeed, becoming a great and crying abuse, and greatly impoverished the nation.†

Fair and useful legislation on the ever-disputed question of the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts was also placed on the statute books by the same Edward I. No just churchman can plead for the immunity of his order from the civil courts and from the royal jurisdiction. The "anointed of the Lord" has no right to claim exemption from the penalties which in every civilised community are wisely attached to treason, murder, or other felonies or civil offences. An ordinance, really only confirming the legislation of king Henry II., which had been allowed in too many cases to fall into abeyance, was passed, restricting the spiritual jurisdiction to matrimonial and testamentary cases. The ordinance in question recognised the right of the clergy to hold pleas on matters merely spiritual, such as offences for which penance was due, tithes, mortuaries, churches and churchyards, injuries done to clerks, perjury and defamation.

Parliamentary representation, somewhat as we now understand the term, first appears towards the close of the long reign of Henry III., and is commonly referred to Simon de Montfort, who successfully rebelled with his brother lords against the abuses and tyranny of the foreign favourites of king Henry. Edward I. enlarged and

* Stubbs: "Constitutional History of England," chap. xiv. † *Ibid.*

THE SION COPE, DATE ABOUT A.D. 1250. (*South Kensington Museum.*)

This Cope is embroidered by hand in silks and gold. Green Ground, with crimson interlacing barbed quatrefoils, enclosing figures of our Saviour, the Virgin, the Apostles, and various sacred subjects. The border at the top is of somewhat later date.

developed this popular representation; and a great and model parliament, in which the representation of the Commons was formally established, met in the year 1295. In this "model" popular assembly the clergy of various ranks were fairly represented. The archbishops and bishops brought the heads of their chapters, their archdeacons, one proctor for the clergy of each cathedral, and two for the clergy of each diocese. Later, however, we find the clergy contented with their great spiritual position, and withdrawing themselves from parliament. This withdrawal, however, does not appear to have applied to the hierarchy, properly so called, such as bishops and archbishops, abbots, priors, and others.

The tyrannical and oppressive assumptions of Rome, less felt under the strong, high-handed rule of Edward I. than in the times of his father Henry III., were, however, only in abeyance. In the year 1299, in a bull dated at Anagni, the Pope definitely claimed Scotland as a fief of Rome, and forbade Edward to molest the Scots. At a parliament held at Lincoln this insolent claim was considered, and a letter from the barons to the Pope, written early in 1301, absolutely swept aside the Papal pretensions to interfere, and added that they, the barons of England, bound to maintain the rights of the crown, would not suffer the king to comply with any such Papal mandate, even were he to wish it.

The most remarkable ecclesiastical event, however, of the thirteenth century was the coming of the friar among us. Unquestionably the rise of the mendicant orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic, and the less important mendicant orders of the Austin and Carmelite friars, gave a new life and infused a new energy into the mediæval church. All classes and orders, from the lowest to the highest, were more or less influenced by their splendid earnestness and devoted work. But very soon the boundaries of their mission, especially as laid down by Francis of Assisi, were overleaped. The mendicant friar, at first the humble preacher to the forlorn masses, and the loving comforter of the poorest and saddest of mankind, rapidly claimed to be an equal sharer in the influence and power possessed by the older monastic orders and by the secular clergy. Their undreamed-of success changed the spirit of the friars. Very soon after the death of the saintly founders, Francis and Dominic, we find the mendicant preacher not only in the hovels of the poor quarters of the cities of Christendom, but in the castles of the rich and mighty, and even in the palaces of kings. St. Louis of France is said to have held the mendicants in such high honour as to have exclaimed, "that if he could have divided his body, he would have given one half to either saint, Dominic or Francis." The Popes also, with that high wisdom which has so often distinguished the holders of the lordly Papal dignity, saw at once the power of the "silent untraceable agency" of that marvellous network of influences stretching over the whole of western Christendom, and adopted these communities as especially their servants, binding very closely to themselves the mighty and ever-increasing army of mendicant friars.

We have already alluded to the rapid change which passed over the once illiterate and book-hating friar in regard to learning. Very soon we find the Franciscan and Dominican not only occupying the pulpits of England and the continent of Europe, but aspiring to fill the chairs of the public teachers in the universities; and in the last half of the thirteenth and in the course of the fourteenth century, the most distinguished professors of western Christendom wore the humble habit of St. Francis or St. Dominic. Of the five greatest doctors of the famous schoolmen, two—Aquinas, surnamed the angelic doctor, and Albertus Magnus, the universal doctor—were Dominicans; while three—Bonaventura, the seraphic doctor; Duns Scotus, the most subtle doctor; and the most influential perhaps of all, William of Ockham, the demagogue, the inspirer of Wyclif, a precursor of the English reformers of the sixteenth century—were Franciscans. To this short but distinguished list might be added many others whose names for centuries have been household words in the homes of learning, such as Alexander Hales and Roger Bacon, some of them scarcely inferior to the great five. These great scholars and thinkers all wore the habit, and belonged to the obedience of Dominic or of Francis. Roughly, it may be said that on the Continent and at Rome the Dominican exercised a supreme influence; while at Oxford and in England a similar power was possessed by the Franciscan.

But as they rose in numbers and in influence they became, as might have been expected, the objects of the fiercest jealousy to many of the members of the monastic orders and the secular clergy, on whose ancient and established privileges they encroached ever more and more. As preachers, as confessors, they drew away the people from their own parochial clergy; they became, instead of the clergy and the older monasteries, not unfrequently legatees, and that in spite of their ancient vow of poverty. Loud and vehement were the complaints of the clergy; but moved, no doubt, by the evident good-will which was felt for these intruders at headquarters in Rome, and also, no doubt, powerfully influenced by the really good work which the friar was doing in the deadly warfare ever waged by the church against vice and ignorance and irreligion, the more prominent leaders of the church generally supported the mendicants. At Cologne, Conrad of Zähringen, general of the Cistercian order, the Papal legate, when the priest of a great city parish complained to him of the Dominicans interfering in his cure, is said to have asked the indignant priest how many parishioners were under his charge: "Nine thousand," was the reply. "Miserable man," then answered the legate of Rome, "presumest thou to complain, charged with the care of so many souls, that these holy men are relieving you from part of your too heavy burden?"

The spirit of the two great orders, after they had risen to a position of commanding influence in the church, largely corresponded with the character of their respective founders. The Dominican was stern, grave, severe, and jealously orthodox. To his hands was eventually entrusted by the church that terrible engine of persecution — the Inquisition. The

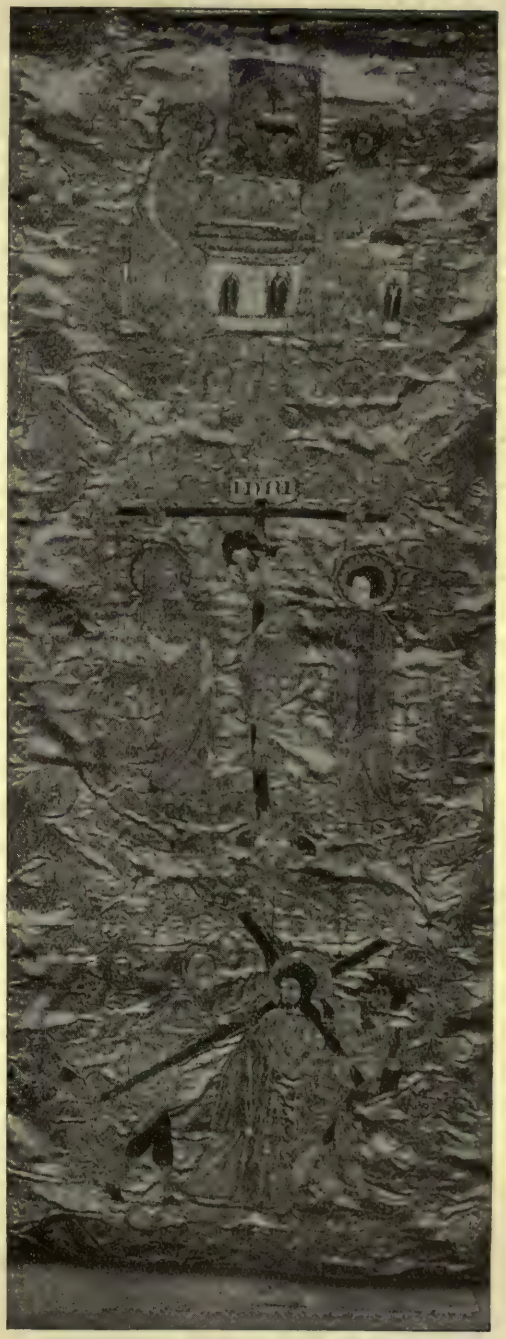
Franciscan, on the other hand, whose influence in England was enormous, was passionate, even hysterical, and his vast power became considerably limited, owing to the fatal schism which soon rent his order asunder. The Franciscans divided into two parties: the one too willing to tamper with the original vow of holy poverty, and to admit the possibility of the order becoming wealthy; the other rigidly adhering to the saintly founder's first intention, which forbade sternly the possession of worldly goods to every brother of the order. These were designated by the title "spiritualists." The majority, however, of the order could not resist the temptation of accepting the riches which the devotion of men and women pressed upon them; and, as a silent protest against the "spiritualists," the magnificent church in Assisi rose over the coffin of the adored founder.

FRENCH IVORY TRIPTYCH, 13TH CENTURY. (*South Kensington Museum.*)

The schism between the two Franciscan schools grew, and no doubt prevented the mendicant from attaining the great power which his unexampled success at first seemed to promise him. In the end the "spiritualist" school—the Fraticelli—died out; but there is little doubt but that the vigorous protest of so many of the noblest of the Franciscans in favour of an absolute poverty largely influenced the

policy of the English mendicants, for at the general suppression of the religious houses under Henry VIII., in the sixteenth century, although the poverty of the order was doubted by the royal commissioners, there was comparatively little found either in their possession, houses, or churches, worth plundering. Towards the close of the thirteenth century and during the fourteenth, although the power and influence of the Franciscans was still enormous, the order had begun sadly to degenerate, and loud and deep had become the complaints of all classes against these begging friars, long before the time of Wyclif, who openly denounced them in the middle of the fourteenth century.

One of our most accurate and profound historians, whose words we have frequently quoted, speaks of this thirteenth century as "the golden age of English churchmanship." It produced the majority of those wise statesmen and churchmen who, resisting the crimes and terrible mistakes of John, and the headstrong follies of Henry III., guided safely the ship of the state through that long period of trouble and danger. Archbishop Langton, more than any man, was the author of the Great Charter. Grosseteste of Lincoln was the friend and adviser of the patriots who successfully opposed the unpatriotic ministers of Henry III. Edmund of Canterbury, the gentle, uncomplaining saint whose heart, men said, was at last broken by the weary troubles and restless cares of his high position, was the adviser who compelled the first banishment of the foreigners brought over by Henry III. St. Thomas of Cantilupe was the



EMBROIDERED REREDOS OF 14TH CENTURY.
(*Steeple Ashton Church.*)

chancellor of the baronial regency. Grosseteste was perhaps the most distinguished of these great ecclesiastical statesmen, the trusted friend and confidant of princes and soldiers, the comrade first and later the patron of those famous scholars who made Oxford the first school of learning in the world of the west. But he was also, as we have already seen, the most learned and holy churchman of his time, devoted to his great spiritual work. He was the example of a saintly mediæval bishop.

The inner life of what we may venture to call the official church, in contradistinction to the great mendicant societies of friars, was carefully watched, and anything of the nature of abuses, either in doctrine or practice, was severely commented upon and, as far as possible, eradicated by the great office-holders among the hierarchy of the English church. Councils and synods were held from time to time. We will allude very shortly to the decrees and acts of one or two of these.

In the provincial synod of Reading, held under the presidency of the Franciscan, Peckham, who was archbishop of Canterbury from 1279 to 1292, we find allusion to the constant disregard of the celibacy enactment by many of the English clergy. Regulations as to infant baptism were made at this synod. Children born within eight days of Pentecost or Easter were reserved to be baptised at these times. Children born at other times were to be baptised at once, for fear of sudden death. The curious later Baptist tenet, which defers the sacrament for many years, seems to have been unheard of, or at least unnoticed, in the mediæval church.

In the council of Lambeth, under the same arch-prelate, held in 1281, the too common irreverence of priests towards the "sacrament of the altar" is sharply commented upon. Priests were required to consecrate the elements at least once a week; to keep the sacrament in a tabernacle, and to cause the bells to toll when the consecration took place, that those who were in the houses or in the fields might bow the knee. The people still partook of the cup, but they were

CHALICE AND PATEN, SILVER GILT ENRICHED WITH ENAMELS, ABOUT A.D. 1300. (*South Kensington Museum.*)

instructed that the wine was given them not as part of the sacrament, but to enable them to swallow the sacrament, which was taken whole under the species of bread. Confirmation seems to have been very much neglected, and it was enjoined that the Eucharist should not be administered to any who had not received confirmation. "Nuns," said this council, "were too much in the habit of wandering, and this practice caused scandal to the church." Many of the clergy deserved rebuke for their assumption of the rich dress of laymen, "wearing coifs and hair-laces." Disputes were constantly arising between rectors of parishes and their

parishioners touching the ornaments of the church. This council directed that each parish should provide, amongst other things, the chalice, the principal mass vestments, a chasuble, a clean alb, a cross for processions, a lesser cross for the dead, a bier, a cense-pot, bells, manuals, a vessel for holy water, fonts with lock and key, reparations for the body of the church within and without, as well as altars and images, glass windows, and the inclosure of the churchyard. The chancel and its reparation was left to the rectors and vicars.*

In the Welsh dioceses, archbishop Peckham in 1284 issued stringent directions respecting the clergy of the cathedral of St. David's, many of whom were married; such priests were ordered to be deprived of their canonries.

It will be convenient here to go beyond the strict limits of our present period, and to add a few details of subsequent synods and councils, which have their bearing on the practices of the mediæval Church of England. About forty years after the council of Lambeth, in the year 1322, when Edward II. was king and Walter Reynolds archbishop of Canterbury, a synod of considerable importance, known as the "second of Oxford," was held. Strict directions were issued by this council on the subject of the examination of candidates for holy orders, and a list was prepared of certain classes of persons utterly ineligible on account of their previous lives. Clergy ordained in Ireland, Scotland, or Wales were prohibited from officiating in England, except upon the production of letters dimissory or commendatory from their diocesans. An order was also made at this council for the publication of banns of marriage. Such publication was to be made three times, on the Lord's day or on some great festival. The clergy were forbidden to receive confession from women in private. Allusion was again made to the prevalent neglect of confirmation, and further arrangements sanctioned respecting this holy rite. An interesting canon was also passed concerning some evident want of reverence, which was noticeable in the solemn act of celebration. "Let the linen cloths, corporals, palls, and other altar cloths be white and clean, and often washed by persons assigned by canon for this purpose, out of regard to the presence of our Saviour and of the whole court of heaven, which is undoubtedly present at the sacrament of the altar while it is consecrating, and after it is consecrated. Let the words of the canon be fully and exactly pronounced, and with the greatest devotion of mind, with especial regard to those (words) which concern the Holy Sacrament."

At an important synod held at St. Paul's under archbishop Mepeham, primate during the first years of Edward III.'s reign,* certain constitutions were passed, interesting as throwing further light upon important points connected with the doctrinal teaching of the mediæval Church of England. The second constitution of this synod ordains a new festival in honour of the Virgin Mary, which runs as follows:— "That the memory of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of our Lord, may be oftener and more solemnly celebrated in

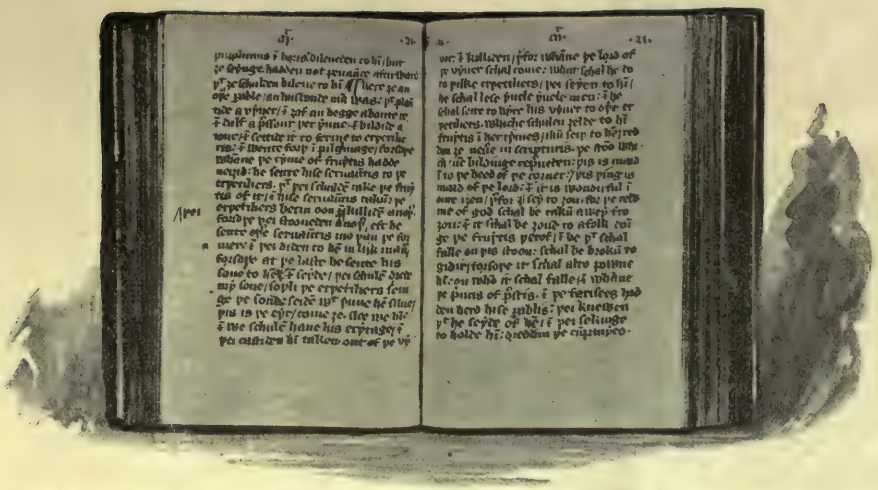
* Compare Dean Hook: "Lives of the Archbishops," vol. iii., chap. vi., and vol. iv

* *Ibid*, vol. iii., chap. ix.

proportion to the greater favour which she, among all the saints, hath found with God. . . . We ordain and firmly command that the feast of her conception be solemnly celebrated for the future." The moderation in tone of this constitution is in striking contrast with some of the more turgid and exaggerated statements of Rome. Another constitution of this great synod insists upon the strict observance of Good Friday, which it curiously reckons among the *festivals* relating to the Saviour.

Three years after this, at a council held at Mayfield in Sussex by the same archbishop Mepeham, the question of keeping religiously certain holy days is carefully dealt with. The days in question are very much the same as are now appointed by the Church of England to be kept holy. Only a very few additional days are mentioned in this catalogue of the mediæval church, such as the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, St. Nicholas, the Invention of the Holy Cross, etc. On these holy days "the people were reverently to go to their parish churches and await the complement of masses and other divine offices for the safety of themselves and the rest of the faithful, the saints both living and dead." The special object of keeping these saints' days was set forth to be—"that they and other Catholics may deserve to have the saints, whose feasts they may have celebrated, for assiduous intercessors with God."

CENSER OF FRENCH CHAMPLEVÉ ENAMEL, 13TH CENTURY.



WYCLIF'S ENGLISH VERSION OF ST. MATTHEW AND THE ACTS: PAGES CONTAINING ST. MATTHEW XXI. 33—46, THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

(This copy was presented to Sir John Oldcastle, afterwards Lord Cobham, and is now in the Baptist College, Bristol.)

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY. THE BLACK DEATH. WYCLIF.

Papal Encroachments under Edward II.—Suppression of the Knight Templars—Horrible Cruelty of the Proceedings—Reign of Edward III., and Startling Contrast between its Commencement and its Close—His Statute of Provisors—The Statute of Præmunire—These made Possible by the Degradation of the Papacy—The Avignon Popes—The Great Plague of 1349—Its Terrible Results—Special Effects upon the Church—Causes of Popular Feeling against the Church in the Fourteenth Century—Ecclesiastical Abuses—Wyclif—Mixture of Truth and Error in his Teaching—Stages in his Career—Early Life—Attempts at Practical Reform in the Church, and their Failure—Appointed to Represent the English Monarchy against Papal Claims—Becomes Rector of Lutterworth—Attacks Romish Errors—His Views of the Eucharist Condemned—Personal Character—Eucharistic Teaching—Translation of the Bible—Death and Condemnation as a Heretic—The Lollards—Their Excesses and Suppression—Wyclif's Wide and Insensible Influence on Parliament and Politics.

THE reign of the unhappy Edward II. (A.D. 1307–1327) was uneventful as far as regards church matters. He has been graphically described as "not without some share of the chivalrous qualities that are impersonated in his son (Edward III.). He has the instinctive courage of his house, although he is neither an accomplished knight nor a great commander, but he has no high aims, no policy, . . . no kingly pride or sense of duty, no industry, or shame, or piety. . . . He makes amusement the employment of his life. . . . Vulgar pomp, heartless extravagance, lavish improvidence, selfish indolence, make him a fit centre of an intriguing court."* Yet even the learned writer of the above stern estimate of his character considers that his terrible doom was unjust, that "his

* Stubbs: "Constitutional History."

punishment was, if we compare him with the general run of kings, altogether out of proportion to his offence."

HEAD OF KING EDWARD II.
(*From the Effigy in Gloucester Cathedral.*)

The pitiful student of our own times, when he gazes upon the marvellous alabaster effigy in Edward Plantagenet's stately Gloucester shrine, with its beautiful sad face—modelled, tradition says, on a death-mask—cannot help wondering if the poor deserted king so cruelly murdered, with all his weakness and his many faults, was not more sinned against than sinning. Certainly the strange cult of a whole people, from the mighty king, his son, down to the humble peasant; a cult which began almost immediately after his death, and was offered at that stately tomb for many years, would seem to tell us that Edward II. had some qualities winning and lovable, though he possessed not the temperament or the talents which were necessary for a fourteenth-century king.

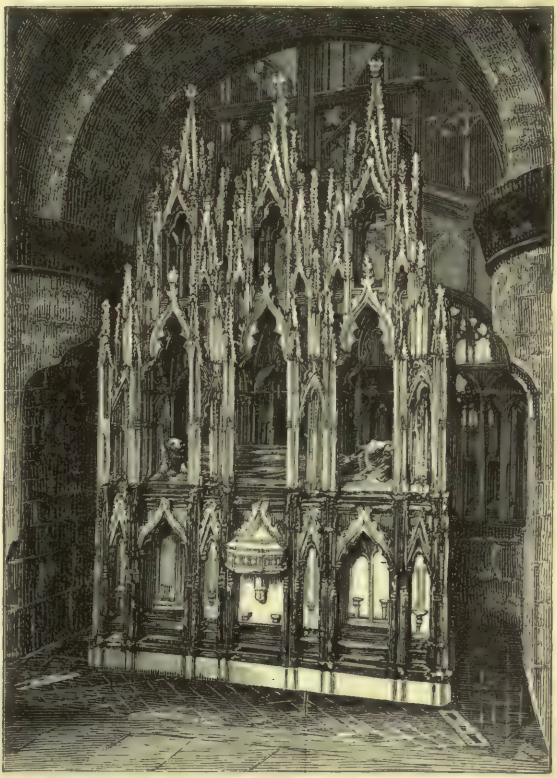
In such a reign, as might have been looked for, the pretensions of Rome to sovereign power over the English Church, so largely ignored during the strong rule of the great first Edward, were vigorously pressed again. The papal power was in the days of Edward II., as we shall see, sorely weakened and discredited, but nevertheless its arbitrary decrees were acknowledged without dispute in England. Indeed the Pope's authority was again and again invoked by king and primate, and under its baleful shadow the administration of ecclesiastical affairs was largely carried on during Edward II.'s reign.

We mark, among the notable instances of this exercise of papal power in England in the reign of Edward II. which deserve especial mention, the king's application to the court of Rome to set aside the election of the chapter of Canterbury, who, on the vacancy caused by the death of Robert Winchelsey, chose one Thomas Cobham, a person of illustrious birth and great attainments. He had been previously chancellor of Cambridge. The king, it is noticeable, did not claim the right himself to appoint, but applied to Rome to *provide* for the arch-see of Canterbury by nominating his old tutor, the bishop of Worcester, Walter Reynolds. Pope Clement V. complied with king Edward's request, and Walter Reynolds became archbishop.

A yet more wide-reaching instance of Roman power acknowledged in the Church of England during this reign, occurred in the request of archbishop Walter Reynolds to the Pope to grant him certain bulls,

through which he could exercise over his great province extraordinary powers. Eight bulls were thus obtained, upon which the primate acted, and these were renewed by Pope John XXII., who succeeded Clement V. Two of these high-handed edicts of Rome, positively applied for by an archbishop of Canterbury, gave the primate extraordinary powers of visitation. Another of them gave him authority to dispense with the canons against pluralities. Another placed in his hands any single ecclesiastical preferment belonging to a cathedral or collegiate church visited by him. But the eighth was perhaps the most startling in its provisions. By it the archbishop was privileged to give an indulgence for all crimes committed within a hundred days past to any persons who should show themselves penitent and confess to him in his visitation.

On one occasion, in the year 1319, a dispute arose between the king and the chapter of Winchester respecting the filling of the vacant see. The dispute was referred to Rome, and the Pope decided it by providing for his own nuncio in England, Reginald Asser, who was eventually consecrated bishop of the important see of Winchester.



SHRINE OF EDWARD II. (*Gloucester Cathedral.*)

The decay of the Crusading fervour was marked in his reign by a terrible episode, ghastly in its iniquity, which cannot be passed over in silence, since it is of considerable interest in the history of the western church, though England only had a subordinate share in it. We have already briefly touched upon the beginnings of the famous "order of the Temple of Jerusalem." As early as the year 1118, in the first years of the strange passion of the Crusades, nine French knights devoted themselves to the protection of Christian pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre. Their ranks were speedily increased, and all nationalities pressed into their company. They formed a half military, half monastic community. Their solemn vows included chastity, implicit obedience to their superiors, and a renunciation of all

personal possessions. Perfect discipline, reckless bravery, a real enthusiasm for the cause to which they were devoted, rendered them the most conspicuous as well as the most effective of the Crusaders. In their ranks were found some of the noblest by birth, as well as not a few of the most adventurous spirits of the age; and a reverential admiration on the part of the nations of western Christendom by degrees enormously enriched the growing order, till, at the expiration of an existence of about two hundred years, the Templars possessed enormous wealth, consisting of broad lands, strong castles, money, treasure of all descriptions, the result of the lavish generosity of their admirers. Matthew Paris records that they possessed in Christian countries as many as nine thousand manors; another chronicler increases the computation to ten thousand five hundred. At one period the Dominican friars were their fervid allies, and made a point of requesting from every dying penitent whom they attended a legacy to the Templars. One king (of Arragon) even bequeathed to them his kingdom; but this almost incredible bequest was not sanctioned by his subjects.

At the commencement of the fourteenth century the original number of nine knights had grown into 15,000, all splendidly accoutred and admirably horsed, perfect soldiers, and each knight accompanied by a squire, a page, and a man-at-arms, and followed by a number of armed and devoted slaves brought from the east.* The French knights were largely in the majority in the ranks of this strange army, made up of many nations. And the "Temple" at Paris, with its vast and stately buildings, was looked upon as the central home of the mighty order, where the general chapters were, as a rule, held, and whence proceeded the directions issued to the various Grand Masters of the many provinces in England, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Germany.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century the work for which they had been originally constituted, and in which they had borne so distinguished a part, was done. The Crusades, after the enormous expenditure of lives and treasure, had accomplished nothing; their early conquests had been lost. Jerusalem had fallen, and the various fortresses in the east were taken or abandoned. There was no longer any serious intention in the west of prosecuting the interminable and desolating eastern wars. But the Templars, though their *raison d'être* no longer existed, as an order were more numerous, more powerful, more wealthy than ever. Very changed was also the spirit which animated the mighty community. Their apologists—even those who most bitterly condemn their persecution, and regard with an unfeigned pity the circumstances which accompanied their fall—confess this. Their overweening pride; the grave suspicion of lax morality in the case of certain of the knights; their complete independence of all ecclesiastical discipline and authority; the danger to the various governments of Europe which the presence of such a powerful military order in their midst would constantly present; made the Templars obnoxious alike to every sovereign and to the church. They were virtually independent of the king, and they refused

* Michelet.

PILGRIMS UNDER ESCORT OF KNIGHTS TEMPLARS, IN SIGHT OF JERUSALEM.

to acknowledge any right of the church to interfere with them. No bishop or archbishop was recognised as their spiritual superior; a shadowy acknowledgment of the Pope was their only real link with the powerful hierarchy of western Christendom.

The king of France in the year 1307, memorable as being fatal to the Templars, was Philippe le Bel—a needy and greedy sovereign. He determined to destroy the mighty and somewhat dreaded order, and to enrich his empty treasury with their enormous possessions. Utterly unsuspicious of his design, proudly conscious of their position and power, the Templars never dreamed of a serious attack upon their privileges and wealth. But king Philippe le Bel had well calculated his power and had skilfully prepared his measures. Grave rumours affecting the life led and designs entertained by the Templars had for some time been floating about—rumours largely owing to the malevolent and sinister designs of the king of France. These evil rumours gradually crystallised into definite accusations. The proud Templars, conscious of the wildness of many of the charges, and their general innocence of the graver matters alleged against them, persuaded, too, of their own far-reaching power, paid little heed to these. But suddenly Christian Europe was startled to hear that, as far as France was concerned—and it must be borne in mind that the flower of the order was located in France—all the knights Templars were arrested by the king's command, their goods inventoried and sealed, their magnificent houses occupied by the royal soldiery. And all this was done with a foresight and celerity that admitted of no resistance. The knights of the mighty order in France, thus in a moment disarmed and rigorously imprisoned—from the Grand Master down to the youngest knight—were accused of awful charges, which may be thus summarised: (1) That at the secret initiation of each knight Templar the novice was compelled to deny Christ and to spit upon the cross. (2) That a hideous idol was the object of their secret adoration. (3) That a terrible licence was allowed to each Templar to commit unknown crimes. (4) That they were in league with the Mahommedan powers, and that on more than one notable occasion in the course of the Crusading wars they had shamefully betrayed the Christian cause.

The greater part of these charges, examined by the cooler light of reason, are simply absurd. No sane man could for one moment suspect, or at the present day does suspect, that they were true. The case against the Templars rests, however, on the "confessions" made by themselves before their judges. But these confessions were extorted by the cruellest and most fiendish tortures; and the fact of such inhuman and revolting tortures having been generally applied, of course minimises, if it does not rather completely do away with all the "evidence" provided by such means; for who can accept a "confession" thus shamefully wrung out? Not only in Paris, the headquarters of the famous order, were these infamous proceedings on the part of the king of France carried out, but with no less awful despatch proceeded also the interrogatories in other parts of France. Everywhere torture was prodigally used;

everywhere with "the same result, some few confessions, some retractations of confessions, some bold and inflexible denials of the whole, some equivocations, some submissions manifestly racked out of unwilling witnesses by imprisonment, exhaustion, and agony." *

But what said the Pope to this tremendous and arbitrary outrage of the king of France upon the persons and property, upon the very existence, of a mighty religious order directly owning submission to him? At first unfeigned astonishment seems to have been his feeling. But over the Papacy at this juncture brooded a strange dark cloud. Rent with internal divisions and jealousies, the electoral body of cardinals had recently raised to the Papal throne, as Clement V., Bernard de Goth, archbishop of Bordeaux, with whose tenure of office began the line of so-called French pontiffs, the bishops of Rome usually known in history as the "Avignon" Popes, all in succession more or less entirely dependent on the will of, and generally subservient to, the policy of the kings of France. We have already dwelt on this strange phase of the Papacy at some length. Secret negotiations between the king of France and Clement V. resulted in the Pope's giving way. Under the pretext that the revelations extorted from the hapless Templars by torture had convinced him of the guilt of the order, he threw in his lot with king Philippe le Bel, and henceforth the shameless proceedings were carried out in France and in other European kingdoms under the awful sanction of the pontiff who claimed to be the head of Christendom. Helplessly tied and bound by the power of Philippe, conscious that he held his high office almost at the pleasure of the French king, with no high aims or noble purpose of his own, little more than a creature of the ambitious and greedy monarch to whose influence he largely owed his election, the Pope joined Philippe le Bel in this policy of relentless persecution.*

Then followed the burning of the Templars, an act which, even in that wild and stormy age, when human life was held comparatively cheap, stands out with ghastly prominence. In Paris one hundred and thirteen Templars were publicly committed to the flames, with (as Milman sternly adds) "not one apostate." In the provinces of France, on a smaller scale, similar atrocities were recorded. At Senlis nine of the knights of the order perished in the flames; in Carcassonne many more. The lives of the Grand Master, Du Molay, and the three other great dignitaries of the order were spared for the present; but these too, before the curtain fell on the tremendous tragedy, were condemned to perish likewise in the fires of king Philippe. Two of the four, their spirit weakened by long and cruel imprisonment and agonising torture, begged for mercy, and were led back again to a life-long captivity. But Du Molay, the Grand Master, and another of the four chiefs died nobly, protesting the innocence of their loved order to the end,

* Dean Milman: "Latin Christianity," book xii., chap. i., relates these tortures, with awful and blood-curdling details.

* Michelet thus vividly summarises the infamous bargain: "Le Pape lui (Philippe) abandonne les Templiers, il livrait les vivants pour sauver un mort, mais ce mort était le papauté elle même." ("Histoire de France," livre v., chap. iii.)

and averring with their latest breath the Catholic faith of the Templars.

As is so often the case, public opinion veered round at the sight of such great constancy in enduring suffering. The apathy or dislike with which the Templars were regarded, changed into admiration. The heretic and crime-accused became the martyr; and the very friars, so long the jealous enemies of the members of the famous order, are said to have busied themselves, after the death of the Grand Master and his brave companion in suffering, in collecting and carefully interring in consecrated ground the ashes of the last of the Templars.

We have seen how it was the ruthless greed of the king, and the cowardly and inhuman acquiescence of the Pope, which brought about the "Temple" tragedy in France, the headquarters of the "order." We must now consider what was the fate of the knights in England and in other lands of western Christendom, where, although less numerous than in France, the Templars were still an important power which had to be reckoned with. It may well be conceived that both the king and Pope were intensely anxious to justify their cruel action in France, by involving other peoples in their inhuman proceedings against the famous and doomed order. Very early in the dread business Philippe pressed upon Edward II., king of England —who, it will be remembered, was his son-in-law, the husband of the French princess Isabella of later terrible notoriety—to take similar severe measures against the Templars. The tremendous accusation was at first received in England with an almost scornful incredulity. Shortly afterwards, however, a bull of Pope Clement V. arrived, peremptorily commanding the English king to arrest all Templars, and to sequestrate their domains and possessions. The iniquitous Papal bull had its effect, and orders went forth to imprison all the members of the order throughout England; but the arrested were, very differently from the French procedure, treated with some kindness and consideration.

The English trials were conducted with considerable care and attention to legal details, and largely resulted in "a full and absolute acquittal of the order." The points of accusation held to be proven were the right of absolution, held to be in the province of the Grand Master and of certain lay knights in high office. This would naturally constitute a grave offence in the eyes of the church. The secrecy of the "reception" rites was also condemned, as was also the Templar oath—probably misunderstood—to increase the wealth of the order by right and wrong. But of the graver charges none were held to have been established. Some of the evidence brought against the unhappy order was of a most curious character. It was rarely direct, being grounded generally upon report and mere hearsay evidence, more or less vague. Some of the charges were simply ridiculous; for instance, "a certain Templar had a brazen head which answered all questions." "At a great banquet, given by the preceptor at York, many brethren met in solemn festival to worship a calf." "A Templar was heard to say, as he walked along a meadow, 'Alas, alas! that ever I was born! I must deny Christ and worship the Devil.'" "A

Franciscan had heard that a Templar had a son, who, looking through a hole in the wall, saw the knights compelling a pro-

Master of the order, I would not have you enter it. We have three vows, known only to God, the Devil, and the brethren.'

THE TEMPLE CHURCH, LONDON.

fessing knight to deny Christ; on his refusing, they killed him." "One who had desired to enter the order deposed that a knight warned him against it, saying, 'If you were my father and might become Grand

What those vows were, 'the knight would not reveal."* Such, writes Milman, was "the mass of strange, loose, hearsay,

* Several pages of this curious stuff are given in Milman's "Latin Christianity," book xii., chap. iii.

antiquated evidence, much of which had passed through many mouths. This was all which as yet appeared against an order arrested and imprisoned by the king, acting under the Pope's bull. . . . Against the order—we are speaking of the English procedure in the case of the Temple knights—torture was, if not generally and commonly applied, authorised at least by the distinct injunctions of the king and the Pope." Irreverent and heretical sayings uttered by Templars were quoted. The grave charges of immorality seem to have been few and ill-supported.

But their doom was decided. The general sentence against the English Templars was perpetual imprisonment in monasteries. "They seem to have been followed by general respect." In Italy, where the power and influence of the Pope was naturally great, confessions were obtained, but by no means universally; and no doubt, as in France, under torture. In Germany, as the result of a formal investigation held by archbishops of the more important sees, such as Cologne, Treves, and Magdeburg, the order was acquitted. In Spain, in each of the kingdoms of Castille, Leon, and Arragon, and also in Portugal, the acquittal was absolute and positive, the order being pronounced guiltless. Only in France and in parts of Italy were confessions of anything serious obtained, but these sad confessions "were invariably, without exception, crushed out of men imprisoned, starved, and disgraced, and generally under the most relentless tortures, or under well-grounded apprehensions of torture, degradation, and misery, with, on the other hand, promises of absolution, pardon, freedom, royal favour; yet on the instant that they struggled again into the light of day, on the first impulse of freedom and hope, . . . all these confessions are for the most part retracted fully and unequivocally."*

Contemporary historians for the most part ascribed the wicked act of the destruction of the Templars to the avarice of Philippe le Bel, to whom, to serve his own selfish purposes, the Pope, as we have stated, abandoned the order. "If," said the unrighteous Clement V., "it (the order) cannot be destroyed by the way of justice, let it be destroyed by the way of expediency, lest we offend our dear son the king of France." The final result, as might naturally have been expected, was that the dissolution of the Templars' order was universally decided upon. The vast treasures accumulated by the knights in their various houses and preceptories, in their castles and houses, fell into the hands of kings and their courtiers, king Philippe le Bel of France being, of course, the chief beneficiary; Pope Clement V., too, enormously enriched himself. No account of these mighty Templar hoards was ever given. In England and France the lands were handed over to the knights hospitallers of St. John, a much poorer and less powerful community than the Templars. But chronicler Villani tells us that these broad domains were so burthened with royal demands, dilapidation claims, and various exactions, that the recipients of the seemingly great gift, the knights hospitallers of St. John, were poorer rather than richer after they had entered into the inheritance of the fallen Templars.

* Milman: "Latin Christianity," book xii., chap. ii.

There is absolutely no doubt now in the minds of serious students, of the general innocence of this great order as to any of the grave and terrible sins which formed the principal matter of the accusations levelled against them by the king of France, Pope Clement V., the pitiful instrument of Philippe le Bel, and their creatures. On the orthodoxy of their faith no real breath of suspicion rests; on the question of their moral character equally nothing definite was proved to show that any special depravity existed in the famous military community. Individual instances of sin in the case of individual knights, no doubt existed, as would be too surely the case in a widespread community in such an age, possessing, as did the Templars, great wealth and power and ample freedom from restraint; but no shadow of proof exists that, as a whole, the order was stained with special or general guilt. The singular charge, so generally made, and which in the many extorted confessions appears and reappears, of the denial of Christ with peculiar gestures of emphasis on the occasion of the ceremony of the initiation of a Templar, apparently had some foundation. It was probably a part of an ancient symbolic rite, based upon the terrible denial by St. Peter with oaths and curses; a denial afterwards forgiven and nobly expiated by a life of self-devotion and renunciation, crowned with a martyr's death. But in the popular mind the act, divested of its symbolical signification, was one of awful blasphemy, and seems, especially in the earlier phases of the persecution, to have contributed more than any other cause to the popular detestation, and to the quiet acquiescence, if not approval, on the part of the people generally in the cruel persecution to which the order was subjected.

The utter failure of the Crusades in their object, after two centuries of tremendous and sustained effort, and the crushing disasters in the East, closing the Crusading wars, to which we have already alluded, no doubt also alienated the sympathy of men in general from an order which had been foremost and conspicuous throughout the long wars. The continued presence of the Templars, their power, pride, and wealth among the peoples of western Christendom, when the reason of their very foundation had ceased to exist, was without doubt a subject of offence in the eyes of churchmen and laymen alike. The Templars were a perpetual reminder of a lost and discredited cause. Men asked, what was their future work to be? They were regarded as useless, even dangerous; so that when the suppression of the order was finally decided upon, even in such countries as England, which formally acquitted them of the more monstrous charges brought against them, no voice seems to have been raised on their behalf.

But of their general *innocence*, the words which decreed their suppression—words, be it remembered, solemnly spoken by their bitter and relentless foe, Pope Clement V.—are the most irrefragable proof. After the abortive meeting of the earlier sessions of the Council of Vienne, A.D. 1311, partly called together to decide upon the fate of the Templars, the Pope determining to suppress the order, in a secret consistory composed of cardinals and prelates devoted to his person, formally pronounced the suppression; but

the words which declared that the great order was extinct are remarkable. Milman thus paraphrases the somewhat enigmatical phraseology of the papal decree: "He," the Pope, "had determined by way of prudent provision, not of condemnation, to abolish the order of Templars." Michelet thus summarises: "Que les informations ne sont pas assez sûres, qu'il n'a pas le droit de juger, mais que l'ordre est suspect." But in spite of this tardy acknowledgment of all failure of proof, Clement decreed the suppression. The bull of abolition, however, did not appear in print before 1606, some three centuries after this unjust and high-handed proceeding.*

The long and outwardly glorious reign of hapless Edward II.'s son and successor, Edward III. (A.D. 1327-1377), is memorable in the story of the Church of England, because in it were passed the great anti-Papal statutes which largely restrained the ever-growing attempts of Rome to reduce the English church to a condition of blind obedience to, and slavish dependence upon the will of the reigning Pope. It is memorable also because, when the third Edward was reigning, arose that illustrious and bold reformer, Wyclif, who, with some truth, has been styled the precursor of the Reformation.

Edward III. has been compared to Richard I. In some outward aspects of his life and influence upon his country the comparison is just. The famous and magnificent Plantagenet was undeniably a warrior of the highest order, and a most distinguished and successful military commander; and his long and brilliant wars placed England in the forefront of Christian nations, giving her an important place among the nations of the west. But although a great warrior, "he was ambitious and unscrupulous, extravagant and ostentatious. Like Cœur de-Lion, he valued England primarily as a source of supplies for his foreign wars. . . The glory and growth of this nation were dearly bought by blood, treasure, and agony of many sorts."* The popular notions of the "gentle, gay, and splendid ideal king of chivalry," the founder of the famous order of the Garter, still the first and most illustrious of the knightly orders of Christendom, are largely derived from the bright pages of the chronicler Froissart, who loves to paint him as the successful conqueror, the pattern knight, the centre of the gayest and most brilliant court in the western world. There is, however, another side of Edward's life and work. His foolish, selfish policy resulted, in the

* The original words are as follows: "Quod ipsæ confessiones ordinem valde suspectum reddebant. . . . non per modum definitivæ sententiæ, cum tam super hoc, secundum inquisitiones et processus prædictos, non possumus ferre de jure, sed per viam provisionis et ordinationis apostolicæ."—Quoted by Michelet. The student who may be curious to obtain further details respecting this interesting and singular tragedy, which closed the career of the most famous order of mediæval chivalry, is referred to Michelet ("Histoire de France," livre v., chaps. iii., iv.), who tells the story of the fall of the Templars with his usual brilliancy and picturesqueness of detail, accompanied, however, with that somewhat offensive realism which disfigures too often his vivid descriptions. And to Milman ("Latin Christianity," book xii., chaps. i., ii., iii.), where at great length and with conspicuous fairness are related the various steps of the great process.

* Bishop Stubbs: "Constitutional History of England," chap. xvi.

long run, in a series of terrible troubles and barren wars, which exhausted and long crippled the country which is so proud of the conqueror of Creçi, whose splendid court was adorned with the presence of the captive kings of France and Scotland. There is another picture of the famous warrior-king less familiar to the ordinary student of English history, which shows us Edward III. in his old age, overwhelmed with debt, worn out and partly imbecile, entirely under the sway of court factions, and especially influenced by his evil genius, Alice Perrers, who, after the death of queen Philippa, was all-powerful with the once magnificent sovereign, the mirror of chivalry.

Photo: Neurdin, Paris.

THE CASTLE OF THE POPES, AVIGNON.

The system of papal provisions had long been viewed with distrust and dislike by all true patriots among the English laymen, as well as by the nobler spirits among the ecclesiastics. Under this technical term of "provisions," the Pope claimed the right of providing for the entire patronage of all the higher preferments in the church—a right which, as we have seen, he not unfrequently exercised. The sovereign on several occasions took advantage of this claim on the part of the Pope, and thus availing himself of Rome's good offices,

without much difficulty procured the election of his nominee to the primacy. The Roman claims grew more and more obnoxious in England, and the terms in which they were exercised became, as time went on, more haughty and imperious. When John Stratford was appointed to the archbishopric of Canterbury in the year 1333, we read how Pope John, formally ignoring any English rights, simply appointed the primate of the English Church, not because of any election of the Canterbury chapter, but simply of his own will,* "non virtute postulationis capituli cantuariensis set proprio suo motu."

The feeling, as the reign of Edward III. advanced, grew more and more intense. At length the king, now a great power in Europe, in conjunction with his nobles, addressed a strong remonstrance to the Pope, who, however, replied haughtily and contemptuously. This unavailing remonstrance was shortly followed by parliamentary action on the part of England. All the estates of the realm were agreed as to the intolerable nature of the abuse, and in the year 1351 the first famous *Statute of Provisors* was passed, in which it was enacted that any person accepting a "provision" of the Pope, and disturbing the right of a patron by such provision, was to be imprisoned, and not be released until he had paid a fine, and had given security that he would not transgress again or sue for redress in any foreign court. This great and important statute swept away the right of Rome to present to any preferment in the Church of England, from a simple benefice to the arch-see of Canterbury. The Statute of Provisors, first passed in the year 1351, was formally re-enacted on several subsequent occasions, notably twice in the reign of Edward III., and again in the reigns of Richard II., Henry IV., and Henry V.

Two years after the passing of the statute of "Provisors," in the year 1353, a yet more direct blow was aimed at papal usurpations in the well-known statute of *Præmunire*, by which all appeals to the Pope and his courts were virtually forbidden and made penal. This all-important statute derives its name from the first words of the writ, which runs thus: "*Præmunire facias præfatum*, A.B., etc." Præmunire, a word fairly common in mediæval use, signifies "to forewarn." The statute was very definite, and enacted that all the people of the king of England's allegiance who should draw out of the realm, any plea whereof of the cognisance pertaineth to the king's court, should appear before the king's justices to answer to the king for the contempt done in this behalf. If they failed to do this, their lands, goods and chattels were forfeit to the king, and they were, in addition, to be imprisoned.*

The Statute of "Præmunire" was re-enacted in A.D. 1365, and in the following year (1366) the parliament—the bishops lords, and commons—unanimously repudiated the burden of papal superiority which had been undertaken by king John, and refused to pay the tribute of 1,000 marks, which had been long in arrear, and which now ceased altogether. Even

* Bishop Stubbs: "Constitutional History," chap. xvi., and Dean Hook: "Lives of the Archbishops," vol. iv.

* Dean Hook: "Lives of the Archbishops," vol. iv., chap. xii.

Peter's pence, the ancient Romescot, which dated from the far-back Saxon times of Offa and Ethelwulf, was withheld for a time. Thus the first great blow was formally struck at the long-continued Roman supremacy over the Church of England.

Never had these bold and drastic measures been passed and carried into effect, even by a nation which stood so high among European nations as did England after the campaigns which followed the victory of Creçi, had not the papal power previously sunk into a state of degradation and comparative impotence, in which state it continued for more than a hundred years.

When the great Pope Boniface VIII. died, in the year 1303, divisions and intrigues divided the electoral college of cardinals. Boniface's death has been, not without reason, attributed to poison; grave suspicion also hung round the swift and sudden carrying away of his successor, Benedict XI. The year 1305 witnessed the election of a Gascon, Bernard de Goth, archbishop of Bordeaux, to the Papacy, under the title of Clement V. The election was mainly due to the intrigues and power of the king of France; and the cardinals were summoned to attend the coronation of the new Pope, not at Rome, but at Lyons. Cardinal Orsini is said to have uttered the sad prophecy: "It will be long before we shall behold the face of another Pope." He was right; for seventy years the seat of the successor of St. Peter was fixed at Avignon. A satellite of the kings of France, with his permanent home at Avignon, "the successor of St. Peter little more than a French prelate, no longer was environed with the traditional majesty and immemorial sanctity of the Eternal City. He had abandoned the holy bodies of the apostles and the churches of the apostles."* England could afford to disregard any threat of excommunication which issued from the Popes of "Avignon," and later from the Popes of the "schism." This epoch in papal history is termed by the Italian writers "the Babylonish captivity." It lasted more than seventy years—from 1305 to 1376—during which long period the Popes resided at Avignon, not at Rome. The "Babylonish captivity" was succeeded by thirty-eight years of a terrible schism in the Papacy; for these thirty-eight years, generally two rival popes, the one reigning in Italy, the other holding his court in France, claimed the allegiance of the faithful. The fatal schism was not healed until the year 1415 witnessed the formal deposition of the rival Popes at the council of Constance, and the election of Martin V. by that council, when once more the papal power resumed something of its ancient pre-eminence and dignity.

During their seventy years' residence in France the Popes abated none of their insolent claims to universal power, but the prestige of a Pope issuing his bulls and commands from the comparatively unknown and insignificant Avignon was sadly diminished. The glamour which ever belonged to the bishop of Rome, was not inherited by the Avignon Pope, who was rightly looked upon by Christendom as little else than a subservient vassal of the French king. In this country the effect

* Milman: "Latin Christianity," book xii., chap. i.

we have noted. In no European realm was the tyranny of the Roman bishop so oppressive as it was in England, owing to the unpatriotic conduct of king John; and the growing unpopularity of Rome among the English people, received, no doubt, an enormous impetus, when the fact of the Popes of Avignon being really vassals of the French king became manifest to all men. The hereditary jealousy between England and France, the comparatively recent seizure of Normandy, and the French wars and victories of king Edward III., all combined to augment the English feeling against Popes who were French prelates in everything save in name. The result was the unanimous passing of the famous anti-papal act sof "provisors" and "præmunire." The enfeebled papal court found itself utterly powerless. Its threats, once so dreaded, were absolutely disregarded in the England of Edward III., and thus the great anti-papal laws were placed on the statute-book. The Reformation of the sixteenth century had already begun.

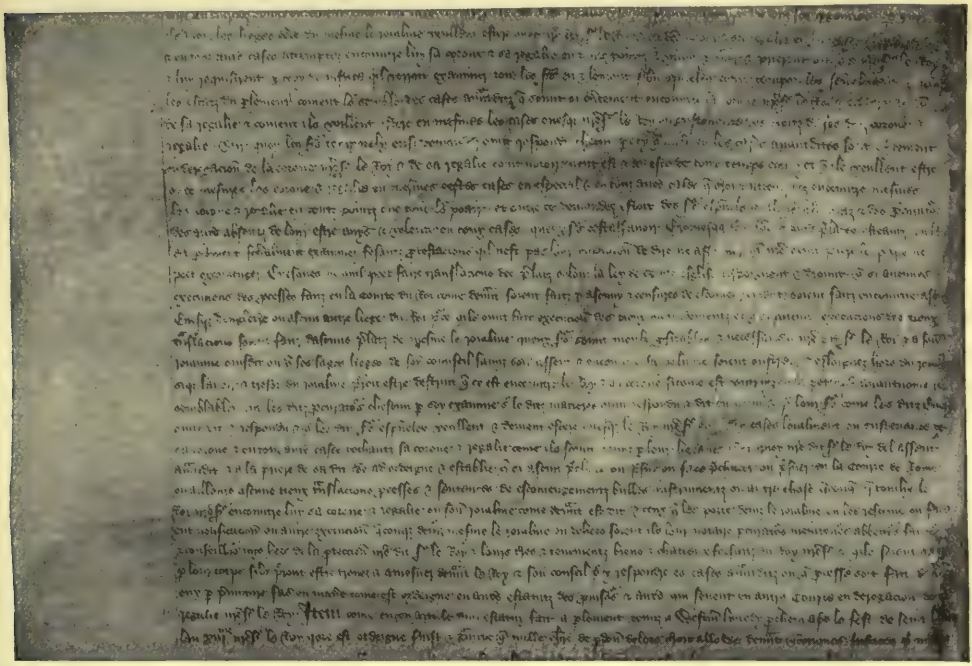
When the councils of Pisa in 1409 and the far more important council of Constance in 1415 had succeeded in restoring the Papacy, so long weakened by exile and discredited by a disgraceful schism, to something of its old grandeur and ancient influence, although some of the causes of papal unpopularity were removed, it was too late, as far as England was concerned, to bring back the old state of things. Happily for herself and her church, aided by the strange combination of circumstances above sketched, England had broken the fatal spell, and at last materially lightened the oppressive and cruel yoke which Rome had imposed on the dioceses of her church, seriously impeding all work and spiritual progress, and fostering a spirit of insubordination, alike injurious to church and state; alike hateful to the patriotic layman as to the earnest, God-fearing ecclesiastic.

On January 1st, 1349, king Edward III. wrote to the bishop of Winchester that the parliament which had been summoned to meet on the 19th of that month was prorogued until the 27th of April, because a sudden visitation of deadly pestilence had broken out in Westminster and the neighbourhood, which was increasing daily. The parliament in question did not meet in April, nor all that year, nor, indeed, until the February of 1350. England had something of more pressing moment to occupy it during the year of grace 1349 than the discussion of the king's taxes or the question of war and peace; a more deadly enemy than the Frenchman was in the land.

The year 1348 was a season of surpassing glory and pride in England. The great victory of Creçi had been won, and the warrior-king Edward was at the height of his fame. England had, through his successful wars, won the first place among the nations of the west, and the pages of Froissart and the chroniclers are brilliant with their pictures of the successful monarch and his splendid court. Later historians have followed suit, and comparatively little has been told us of the awful pestilence and its results. It is only by a careful search among the by-paths of history, that we learn what took place in England in that terrible year of 1349.

The frightful pestilence—for the term

"black death" is a word of later usage—came in the first instance from the east, along the track of the great trade routes from Asia to Europe. We first hear of it in the Italian ports on the Black Sea. During the year 1347 there were notable atmospheric disturbances, extending over



ENTRY OF THE SECOND STATUTE OF PRÆMUNIRE, A.D. 1393, IN THE STATUTE ROLL OF RICHARD II. (*Record Office.*)

a large area of southern Europe, resulting in extensive failure of the harvest, and consequent distress and famine. In the January of 1348 we hear of a violent earthquake, which wrought immense damage in Italy and on the Mediterranean seaboard. And early in the same year the pestilence made its appearance in Avignon and other cities, and a dreadful mortality was reported, especially in the towns of Italy and France. Enormous numbers are said to have perished on the continent of Europe in the fatal year 1348. In the more important cities we read of such numbers as 100,000 dying in Venice, 60,000 in Florence, 70,000 in Sienna. These multitudes of people may have been exaggerated by writers and chroniclers, but there is no shadow of doubt that the mortality was frightful. Early in the following year (1349), as we have seen, the black death—for we shall use the term by which the great pestilence is now generally known—made its appearance in England.

What was this awful disease? Many have suggested, but without reason, that it was scarlatina, as was, very probably, the disease known as the "great plague"

at Athens of which we read in Thucydides. It was not smallpox or cholera. It seems to have been in many respects like the awful scourge which still ever and anon makes its appearance in the crowded and filthy quarters of eastern cities, and in our own day has visited China and India. Villani, the Florentine historian, himself subsequently a victim to the fatal scourge, has left us some curious notes respecting the malady. "It took men generally," writes Villani, "in the head or stomach, appearing first in the groin or under the armpits in the form of swellings. Burning fever rapidly ensued, accompanied with vomiting of blood. The end came swiftly—in some cases in half a day, or within a day or two at most." Boccaccio describes it, as does the great emperor John Cantacuzene. The great surgeon Guido de Chauliac, who spent six months in the midst of it at Avignon, where its ravages seem to have been singularly severe, dwells upon the violent inflammation of the lungs which was a symptom of this fatal malady.

It was the year following its desolating progress on the continent, that the black death raged in England. Its havoc among us seems to have been so widespread that it is difficult to specify any special area where its ravages were marked with peculiar intensity. All the more important cities and towns seem alike to have suffered terribly. Of London, Gloucester, Worcester, Bristol, Oxford, Norwich, Ely, Leicester, York, we possess interesting and mournful details. The country districts were afflicted equally with the towns. The great monastic centres, such as Westminster, Glastonbury, and St. Albans, were visited with extreme severity. If any part of the country is to be singled out, perhaps the vast and important district known as East Anglia might be cited as the section of England most cruelly ravaged by the scourge. Its effect on England is best gauged by a simple quotation of the probable numbers who perished of the deadly visitation. The entire population of England and Wales previously to the mortality of 1349, apparently consisted of from four to five millions, half of whom seem to have perished! * The general result on the life of the country was most striking. Rents fell to half their value. Thousands of acres of land lay untilled and valueless. Cottages, mills, and houses were left without tenants. Ordinary commodities increased 50, 100, and even 200 per cent. in value. Wages everywhere rose to double the previous rate and more.

This sketch of the awful calamity has been given, because its effect upon church life and work in England was very great, and has only very lately, and by certain historians, been attempted to be gauged. The monasteries and religious houses spread over the whole of the kingdom were simply depopulated. For instance, in the year 1235 we know that the abbey of St. Albans counted some hundred monks within its walls. This, of course, does not include the various servants and lay brothers, perhaps amounting to 300 or more besides. Of these hundred, the

* On these numbers, see Dr. Gasquet: "The Great Pestilence," and the various and copious references there quoted; also Dr. Jessop: "The Black Death in East Anglia."

abbot and forty-seven of his monks died at one time. Glastonbury is cited as a very similar instance. "It is impossible to estimate the effect of the plague upon the religious houses. . . . The monasteries suffered very greatly indeed from the terrible visitation. A violent disturbance of the old traditions and the utter breakdown in the old observances, acted as disastrously upon these institutions as the first stroke of paralysis does upon men who have passed their prime: they never were again what they had been."* Indeed, after the pestilence of 1349 the religious houses in existence greatly more than sufficed for the number of vocations in the reduced population. "There is no need to have recourse to a supposition as to the wane in popularity of the religious orders, and the prevalent sense that their work was over, to explain the diminution in their numbers and the absence of new monastic foundations."†

We possess a certain number of statistics of some dioceses, cities, and religious houses, which, with their dry and prosaic figures and unadorned statements, tell us something of what happened in that awful year of death. In the county of Norfolk alone, out of 799 priests, 527 died of the fatal pestilence. In the West Riding of Yorkshire, then a comparatively thinly populated district, 96 priests died out of 141. In the East Riding, out of 95, only 35 survived. It has been computed that above two-thirds of the clergy of England were carried off by the sickness we term the black death. There is no record of the number of Franciscans or Friars Minor who perished of the malady in England, but in the general chapter, held in 1351 at Lyons, it was reckoned that the order had lost through the sickness as many as 13,883 members in Europe. Wadding,* the Franciscan annalist, attributes to the frightful mortality of this plague the decay of fervour evident throughout his own order. "This evil" (the black death) "wrought great destruction to the holy houses of religion, carrying off the masters of regular discipline and the seniors of experience. . . . Our illustrious members being carried off, the rigours of discipline, being relaxed by these calamities, could not be renewed by the youths received without the necessary training rather to fill the empty houses than to restore the lost discipline."

The necessity which everywhere obliged the bishops to institute young and inexperienced, if not positively uneducated clerics to the vacant livings, must have caused grave injury to the work and the prestige of the Church of England. So pressing was the need of ministers in the various churches where the priests had perished, that special faculties were sought and obtained for ordaining persons scarcely qualified. So the archbishop of York received from Rome the power of ordaining at any time, and of dispensing with the usual interval between the sacred orders. The bishop of Norwich was allowed by Pope Clement VI. to dispense with sixty clerks, who were but twenty-one years of age—"though only shavelings"—and to allow them to hold rectories, as otherwise the divine offices

Dr. Jessop: "The Black Death in East Anglia."

† Dr. Gasquet: "The Great Pestilence."

* Dr. Gasquet: "The Great Pestilence."

of the church would cease altogether in many places of his diocese. "At that time," says another writer, "there was everywhere such a dearth of priests that many churches were left without the divine offices: mass, matins, vespers, sacraments."

There is little doubt that much which Wyclif, of whom we are about to speak, saw and deplored in the church, was owing

JOHN WYCLIF.
(*From the portrait at King's College, Cambridge.*)

to this awful calamity, which in one short year swept out of life so vast a proportion of the clergy—two-thirds of the whole number; including without doubt many of the noblest and most devoted, who naturally, in the performance of their pastoral duties, fell in the forefront of the awful battle with deadly sickness. It seems that the church, in fact, never really wiped away the effects of the great calamity, it being absolutely certain that in tone, as well as in numbers, the various religious bodies had not recovered the ground lost during the year of the black death, by the time of the Reformation.*

About the middle of the fourteenth century many circumstances contributed to the state of things in the Church of England, which was so unsparingly criticised and so bitterly attacked by the great reformer Wyclif, who was by far the most powerful adversary of the general hierarchical system of western Christendom that had yet appeared, and who has been termed, with some justice, the first apostle of Teutonic Christianity. Without subscribing to the sweeping and exaggerated opinion, perhaps too largely accepted, that the attack of Wyclif began precisely at the moment when the church of the middle ages had sunk to its lowest point of spiritual decay,† it is clear that a growing feeling of distrust of and discontent with the church existed in England from that period and onwards.

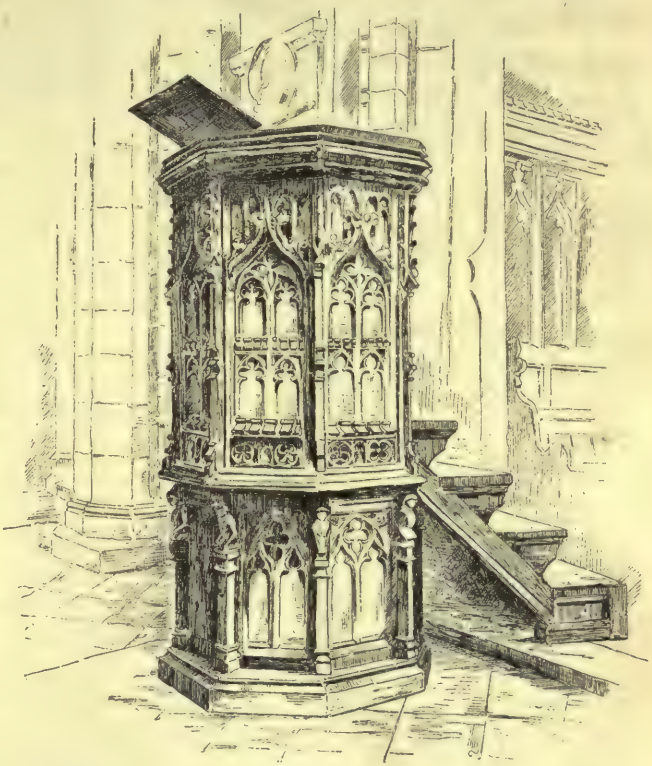
The papal tyranny and its disastrous effects had justly excited a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction among all classes of men, clerical as well as lay. The system of papal "provision" for the filling up so many of the higher and more influential of the church's offices, had worked a widespread mischief. At one time the important deaneries of York, Lincoln, Lichfield, and Salisbury, the archdeaconry of Canterbury, which was reputed the wealthiest English benefice, the archdeaconries of Durham, Suffolk, and York, together with a host of prebends and preferments, were held by

* Compare Dr. Gasquet: "The Great Pestilence," and "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," chap. i.

† Green: "History of the English People."

Italian cardinals and priests: these even obtained bulls from Rome which enabled them to hold as many as twenty livings at once. The abuse of plurality, which often left the spiritual care of the people to hirelings or to the volunteer agency of the friars, was a crying evil; and though it is probable that statements of this unhappy and self-seeking custom have been considerably exaggerated, it is indisputable that it existed, and that not a few districts and cities of England at this period suffered gravely from this shameful though, alas! recognised practice. The enormous sums drawn every year out of England by the Pope's various collectors, legates and officials, created the most serious and well-founded discontent, and these exactions were ever on the increase. Before the end of the century, it was asserted in Parliament that the taxes levied by the Pope amounted to five times the amount of those levied by the king! Taxes on property belonging to the church were, no doubt, specially referred to in such a statement. But, allowing for all exaggerations, there is no shadow of doubt but that the treasury of the Pope was enormously benefited by the various taxes imposed by Rome, and by the iniquitous and utterly inexcusable system of papal provision for valuable and important benefices and preferments. Much of the indignation excited by this wrong-doing on the part of Rome, fell on the church which submitted to and apparently countenanced such proceedings, carried on under the direct sanction of its acknowledged chief and head.

Then, too, the practice, which had become an open scandal, of selling pardons and indulgences—another device for replenishing the papal treasury and enriching the papal emissaries—was beginning deeply to wound and afflict thinking men. Chaucer, reflecting the public opinion current in the last half of the century (he wrote between A.D. 1382 and 1391), good-humouredly, but still with considerable irony, speaks of the wallet of "pardons hot from Rome."



THE WYCLIF PULPIT, LUTTERWORTH CHURCH, 14TH CENTURY.

Within the church itself, many things lessened its influence among the people, and stirred up hostile criticism from friends and foes alike. Her enormous wealth excited wide jealousy, especially as this wealth was very unequally divided, and the deepest poverty often existed among the ranks of her ministers, side by side with vast possessions and luxurious living of some of the members of the hierarchy. Nearly all the important offices of the state, too, at this time were held by ecclesiastics who left their spiritual duties to be performed by paid deputies. That a growing taste for luxury and magnificence among many of the wealthier clergy was on the increase, is manifest from the grave warnings which we find issued in the church synods of the period against extravagance in dress and foppishness, too common, apparently, among clerics. The costly furs, the hanging sleeves, the curled hair, the general imitation of the knights and nobles, were again and again commented upon by the more severe and spiritually-minded of the bishops and church leaders. Chaucer's picture of the hunting monk, and of the courtly prioress with the love motto on her brooch, is well known.

The friar, too, had lost his first love for poverty; his splendid and unselfish enthusiasm to devote himself to the poorest and most afflicted among the population, had sadly waned. A century of popular favour and of ever-increasing fame had not a little sapped his zeal. The mendicants in England, now divided into four orders, as everywhere else, had enormously increased in numbers; but as their numbers and their fame augmented, their original spirituality largely faded away. They had done noble and splendid work, many of them were still doing it; but sad abuses had crept in among them. They had invaded every stronghold of the clergy, the universities, the cities, the county parishes. Terrible jealousies existed between them and the parish ministers, who complained with some reason that these intruders, subject to no church law or ecclesiastical discipline, intercepted the lawful offerings and estranged the affections of their flocks. When Wyclif preached and wrote, there is no doubt that a crowd of impudent mendicants too often dishonoured and brought discredit upon the cause they professed to serve.

And, above all, there was that other cause, which modern historians have almost entirely left out of their reckoning, the awful plague of 1349. The Black Death, whose ravages we have described at some length, had thinned the church by suddenly sweeping out of its ranks two-thirds of its members, including many of its most devoted and earnest servants. Those who supplied their places were largely young, untried, ill-trained men. The church not only suffered in its numbers, but in the character of its ministers.

Yet we must be heedful of allowing a too low estimate of the life and influence of the English church at this period—an estimate easily arrived at by reading the burning words of Wyclif's writings. The church was not dead, by any means. It was still, in spite of many weaknesses, many errors and misfortunes, a great and living power for good, a mighty influence in the land. It still possessed, even in its thinned and plague-shattered ranks, in its Rome-

ridden cathedral chapters, in its desolated and partly emptied monasteries, among its simple village pastors, many a great scholar, many a devoted and ascetic church leader, many a man holy and humble of heart. Chaucer, the popular story-teller, the poet of the people, truthful, earnest, and bright; charming us still, as he charmed his own contemporaries, with his life-like portraits of the men and women he met with daily, lashing with his kindly good-humoured irony all sorts and conditions of men; among his fourteenth-century portraits thus draws one of a humble and devoted parish priest :—

"A good man there was of religioun
That was a poor person (parson) of a toun,
But rich he was of holy thought and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Christ's Gospel trewely wolde preche,
His parishens devoutly wolde he teche."

It was this beautiful and true picture of a parish priest, of a type the popular writer must have known well and met with often, that Dryden so accurately paraphrases in his well-known lines in English, more familiar to us than the old form of speech of the great fourteenth-century poet—

"A parish priest was of the pilgrim train,
An awful, reverend, and religious man.
His eyes diffused a venerable grace,
And charity itself was in his face.
Rich was his soul, though his attire was poor,
(As God had clothed his own ambassador)
For such on earth his blessed Redeemer bore."

The story of Wyclif is not an easy one to unravel. It will ever be a difficult matter to explain, for instance, how one so hated and dreaded as was the great reformer, was permitted to spend the evening of his days quietly preaching and working at Lutterworth. It is said that when his last illness seized him, his enemies were preparing for his arrest and condemnation; but this is uncertain. Considering his colossal greatness — for in learning, in energy, in the amount of good work he left behind him, he towered over all his contemporaries—scant justice has been done him. He has never been a favourite hero in the English church, and much of what is known of him is derived from men who disliked and dreaded him. He left no successor; he stands quite alone. His memory was execrated, and his teaching condemned after his death. But some of the more important doctrines of the reformers of the sixteenth century were anticipated by Wyclif, and clearly taught by him. Justly has he been termed the precursor of the Reformation.

There is no doubt that, mingled with his just views of the absolute independence of the Church of England of all Roman interference; with his intense desire that the Holy Scriptures should be read by all sorts and conditions of men; with his true, clear-cut conceptions of certain important doctrinal truths, notably that of the spiritual Presence in the Holy Eucharist—there are points in his teaching which no serious statesman or churchman could have accepted. His views on church property are impossible, are based on error and misapprehension, and would lead only to immoral confiscation. His teaching on church order is often faulty, and must practically lead to anarchy and disorganisation. In many respects Wyclif would answer to what in modern times is sometimes termed "a Christian Socialist."

But the apologist of this great man may fairly urge in his defence, that the state of the church in Wyclif's days urged him to exaggerate his teaching, drove him to propose crude remedies and destructive reforms, which in a happier and purer age he would never have dreamt of suggesting. No fair historian of his stormy career can consider without regret and sorrow the record of much of his teaching; but he may fairly find a reasonable excuse for these grave errors, when he considers the age and its awful corruption, in the midst of which Wyclif lived and worked.

But at the same time the just historian must, with unstinting praise, give all honour to that true and fearless scholar, who, out of the maze of false teaching which had grown up around the doctrine of the Eucharist, was able to disentangle once more the true conception of the great Sacrament, and to hand it on, a precious legacy, to great English thinkers and teachers. Wyclif's thoughts on this subject have never died. Some century and a half later we shall meet with them again in the period of the great struggle. They helped in no small degree to form the theology of the mighty English reformers. Then, again, it was Wyclif who was bold enough to make the first stand against that vast network of errors which Roman teaching had curiously woven round doctrine and practice, and which was working so disastrously in the Church of England in the fourteenth century. But perhaps the greatest and most enduring work of that strange, wonderful life, was his giving to England the first English Bible. Wyclif will probably never take his proper place among the popular heroes of our country. His teaching was too much mixed with errors, too much disfigured with sketches of unreal and impossible schemes. His real life has still to be written; and when that can be done calmly, dispassionately, apart from the din of controversy, it will be seen that, with all his many faults and mistakes, it was a really great and true man who arose in that confused and troubled period.

Wyclif's remarkable career may be divided into three periods; the *first* extending to about the year 1366, when he appears prominently put forward as the opponent of Rome. During this first period, the time of study and quiet Oxford teaching, we hear little of him. But it was in this long, still time, extending over many years, that he laid the solid groundstones of his vast learning.

In the *second* period, the age of the decline of king Edward III., he plays the part of the recognised opponent of Roman claims and errors and oppressions. He is the reformer, but rather of the life of the church than of her doctrines. During this period of some twelve or more years Wyclif was not content with putting out mere theories respecting church reform. He organised a kind of order of his own —Wyclif's "poor priests," as they were called. To be poor without mendicancy was his ideal for these "poor priests." Barefoot and wearing long russet gowns, these disciples of Wyclif mingled among the poor; and their earnestness and their boldness, and the novelty of the reforms they urged, with their deep sympathy for the poor, obtained for the "poor priests" a wide popularity. Many of them were priests who had joined Wyclif out of

WYCLIF SENDING OUT HIS "POOR PRIESTS."

(From the picture by W. F. Yeames, R.A., by permission of Messrs. Henry Graves & Co., Limited, 6, Pall Mall, S.W.)

admiration for his views and piety and eloquence. Some probably were not ordained at all, but were scholars and others whom his teaching had drawn round him from Oxford and elsewhere—lay preachers, as we should term them. It is erroneous to suppose that Wyclif, as some have suggested, took upon himself to ordain. This order of his, in its earlier years certainly, before he fell under the ban of the church, was even employed under episcopal sanction; certainly in the vast diocese of Lincoln, probably in other dioceses also. "It is idle, perhaps, to conjecture what might have been; but if Wyclif had died *before* his denial of transubstantiation (for which more than anything else he was condemned by the church) —strange dream as it seems, it is less strange than the real life of Francis of Assisi—his name might have come down to us in another form, and miracles might have been wrought at the tomb of their founder by the brother preachers of St. John Wyclif." *

The *third* period of Wyclif's life must be reckoned from the date of the death of Pope Gregory XI., the last of the Avignon Popes, the year of the real commencement of the papal schism, but when once more a Pope issued his mandates from Italy and Rome. This period of the reformer's career lasted from 1378 till his death at Lutterworth in 1384. A curious reaction in favour of the Papacy set in during these last six years of Wyclif's career. When the Popes ceased to be French Popes living at Avignon, their unpopularity in England in a great measure came to an end. A good deal of the old reverence for the head of the church naturally returned, when the head of the church ceased to be a French prelate devoted to the interests of the bitter foe to England; and Wyclif, when the Pope once more to a great degree regained his power among the English people, gave up all serious hope of seeing any practical reform in the church. From this time till the end came six years later, he devoted himself exclusively to theology. In 1380 his English translation of *the Bible*—a work he had no doubt been long preparing—was put out; and in the following year his famous paper, containing twelve propositions, in which he denied the doctrine of transubstantiation, was issued. It was on these propositions that his prosecution by archbishop Courtenay was framed, and his subsequent condemnation as a heretic was principally founded.

Of his early, and indeed of his middle life, we know very little. Of humble birth, he was one of the many poor but ardent scholars who found their way, still young, to the great teaching centre of Oxford. Tradition speaks of him as a scholar, first of the loved queen Philippa's (wife of Edward III.) new foundation of Queen's College, and subsequently as a student—perhaps a teacher—in the older and more famous foundation of Merton. Years must have passed over Wyclif's head before we find him illustrious, during which long studious period he laid the foundation of his future greatness. In 1356 the famous treatise entitled the "Last Age of the Church" was put out. It is usual to assign that wild but striking work to Wyclif, but no real or substantial

* Introduction to "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," Rolls Series.

evidence connects him with this writing. The "Last Age of the Church" was, no doubt, inspired by the awful plague, the Black Death which had so desolated England a few years before, and the effects of which, in the emptied religious houses, in the thinned ranks of the clergy, in the distress and confusion which were the results of the fearful visitation, had stirred the minds of many devout men, who in the crushing calamity thought they discerned the woes which were to usher in the "last things." The "Last Age of the Church" contained stern denunciations against the clergy, especially the holders of the more valuable preferments, as well as an interpretation of the recent miseries as heralding the approaching termination of the world; and although Wyclif was not the author of the famous writing in question, it was amidst the scenes which inspired it that his student life was passed.

It was not until the year 1361 that we find Wyclif holding high office in his university. Between the years 1361 and 1366 he seems to have been master or warden of Balliol College, and especially distinguished for his bold denunciation of the mendicant friars, whom he branded as hypocrites, as professing mendicancy while all the while possessing stately houses, riding on noble horses, enjoying all the pride and luxury of wealth with the ostentation of poverty. The humbler of these friars, numbering a great host, he denounced with rough, eloquent indignation as nothing more than able-bodied beggars, who were working positive evil and mischief in the church and state they professed to serve.

During all the early and middle life of the Reformer we hear nothing of any attacks by him upon the doctrinal system current in the Middle Ages. All his efforts were directed to a reform of the practice, rather than of the teaching of the church. It was only in the later years of his career that he appears as one who impugned the accuracy of the church's teaching in certain important points. All his earlier efforts were directed against what every earnest and thoughtful churchman felt were terrible abuses, though Wyclif and a few of his disciples were alone bold enough publicly to denounce them. The evils which the pretensions of Rome had brought upon the church, above described, the vast sums which were yearly drained from English ecclesiastics to support the extravagance and intrigues of the papal court of Avignon, the scandal which the vast crowds of begging friars brought on religion, the luxury and state which characterised too many of the office-bearers in the church—these were the points which especially engaged Wyclif's attention until, roughly speaking, he had entered into the last decade of his life.

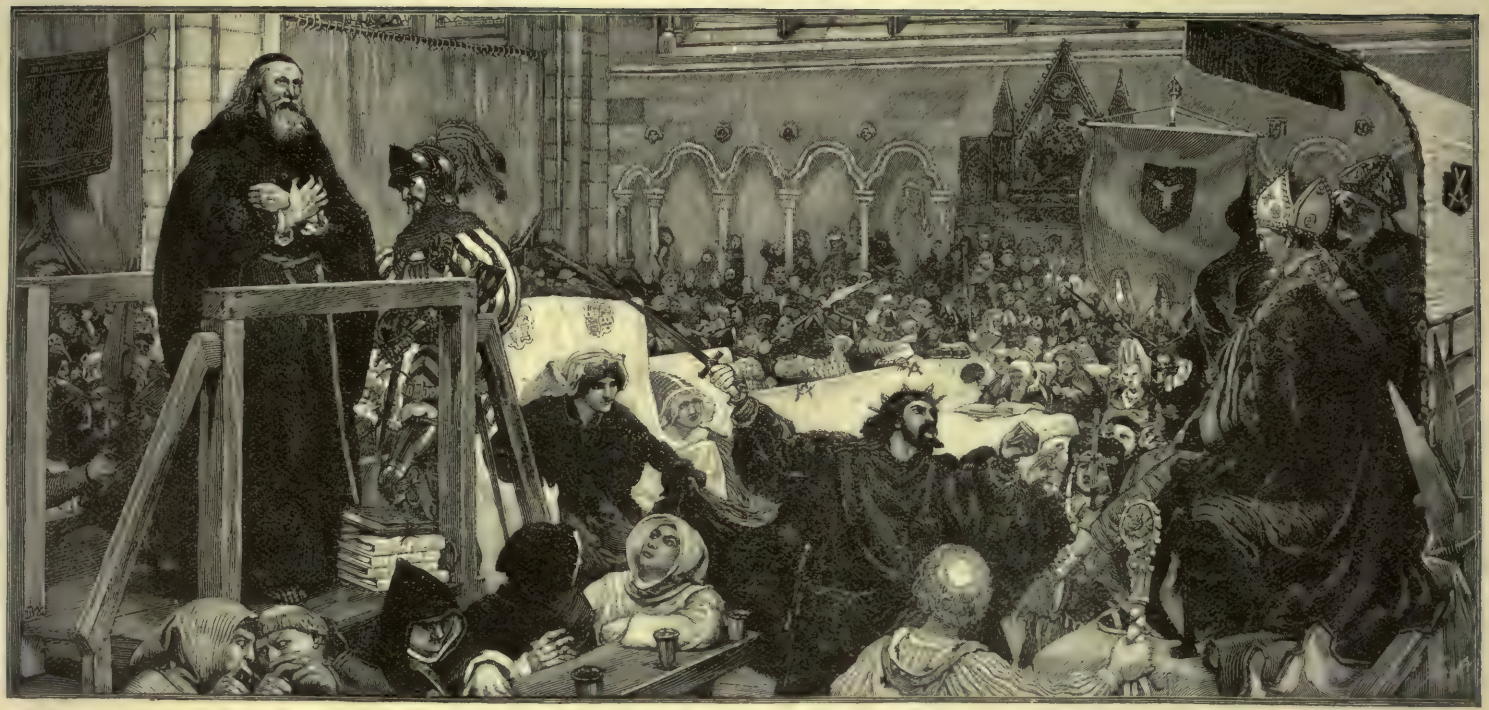
Out of heart at the failure of his efforts to bring about a reformation of the inner and outer life of the church he loved so well, he then turned his thoughts to faith rather than practice; and by boldly questioning the doctrinal teaching of the day, he drew upon his head the bitter condemnation of Rome, and Rome's agents and faithful adherents everywhere. Condemned and viewed with suspicion and dislike, often shading into hatred, while he lived, after his death he was branded as a heretic.

The last fourteen or fifteen years of

Edward III.'s reign—that is to say, from about 1363 to 1377—was a period of rapid decline in the prosperity of the country. Between the years 1350 and 1363 England had stood on a lofty pinnacle of greatness among the nations after the victory of Creçi and the French wars. In these fifteen sad years all the conquests made during the early brilliant career of Edward III., save Calais, were lost. England saw her navies annihilated and her shores insulted by hostile ships; while at home her people, already enormously diminished by the plague, were still further exhausted by wars. The glory and brilliancy of the earlier days was utterly forgotten, in the shame and disasters of these last fifteen unhappy years, and the most kindly apologist is dismayed when he has to tell the story of a court where, after the death of the noble queen Philippa, one of the ladies of her bed-chamber, the beautiful Alice Perrers, as the royal mistress reigned supreme, and exercised almost absolute powers, interfering disastrously not only in home and foreign politics, but openly making in the courts of justice a shameful traffic of the favours of the crown.

During this gloomy period of our national history, Wyclif was brought into prominent contact with the general politics of the country. In the year 1366 Pope Urban, no doubt taking advantage of the declining fortunes of England and her king, put forward a demand for the long arrears of the tribute due to Rome under the shameful convention of king John. This payment of 1,000 marks annually—a very large sum, considering the value of money in those days—had been made with fair regularity during the feeble reigns of John, Henry III., and Edward II., but had been sternly refused by Edward I. and his warrior-grandson Edward III. Such a demand, pressed by the Avignon Pope, intensified the hatred with which Rome was regarded by statesmen, and indeed generally by the English church and people. The attitude of the Pope towards England, however, was signally changed from the times of John and Henry III., when he trampled upon every national right and privilege. Now he consented to temporise, instead of launching interdicts and excommunications against the country, so long submissive, which had presumed to question his so-called rights. Ten years later a conference between England and the papal legate, to be held at Bruges, was agreed upon, and the famous anti-papal scholar Wyclif was named by king Edward as his second commissioner. The formal appointment of Wyclif to such a weighty mission shows his importance to the realm, and also in what esteem the great scholar who had boldly proclaimed the necessity of urgent reforms in the church was held in the England of 1376, the last year of Edward III.'s reign. Wyclif was, during this part of his career, strongly supported by John of Gaunt, king Edward's son, who in the declining years of his father, when the Black Prince was sinking into his premature grave, exercised enormous influence. The reigning Pope was Gregory XI., known as the last of the Avignon Popes, an ecclesiastic of high character and great energy.

Nothing was definitely or permanently settled by the Bruges conference. Both the Pope and the English government



THE TRIAL OF WYCLIF.

(From the picture by Ford Madox Brown, by permission of Henry Boddington, Esq., Pownall Hall, Wilmslow, Cheshire.)

made concessions, but it was rather a truce for a season than a definite agreement. The Pope certainly waived many of his haughty pretensions, but he formally surrendered none of the papal claims, and we find Rome still continuing to nominate to archbishoprics, bishoprics, and rich abbeys. On the other hand, on the part of England the anti-papal statutes of Provisors and Præmunire remained unrepealed. As a sequel to the Bruges conference, Wyclif was rewarded by the prebend of Aust, on the Severn, the traditional meeting-place of Augustine and the British bishops, and with the rectory of Lutterworth, which he held till the end of his life.*

The year 1377 witnessed the death of Edward III., who, alas! had long outlived his fame, and the accession of his ill-fated grandson Richard II., the dead Black Prince's heir. One of the first acts of the new king's ministers and Parliament was to claim a large amount of treasure collected for the Pope by his English agents. Desirous legally to establish the national right to this papal collection, Wyclif was selected to frame the legal plea for this confiscation. He declared with extreme hardihood that the necessities of the nation had the first and paramount claim to all moneys raised within the realm; and, quoting the honoured name of St. Bernard, publicly proclaimed besides that the Pope could pretend to no secular dominion as the successor of St. Peter. But now the time was arrived when Wyclif was regarded at Rome as a dangerous heresiarch; and Pope Gregory XI. sent bulls to England, to the archbishop of Canterbury, Simon of Sudbury, the University of Oxford, and king Richard II., commanding that inquiry should at once be made into the erroneous doctrines of the bold reformer. Wyclif, in consequence, appeared before an ecclesiastical court held at Lambeth, and there openly declared in a public reply to the accusation, that the property of the church was not inalienable, but was subject to forfeiture by the temporal power. He also asserted that spiritual powers of condemnation, such as excommunication, and even the right of absolution, were not absolute and unconditional, but were valid only if uttered in conformity with the will of God. His condemnation was only stayed by the death of Gregory XI. and the subsequent schism in the Papacy. Gregory XI. died in the year 1378.

It was in the year 1382 that the provincial council at the Black Friars in London met under archbishop Courtenay. At this council Wyclif was naturally condemned. His view of the Holy Eucharist was pronounced to be heresy, along with other conclusions drawn from his writings. He was banished from Oxford, but allowed to retire unmolested, at least for a time, to his living at Lutterworth. The grandeur of the position of Wyclif in England, and the vast influence he had won over the hearts of the people, is strikingly shown by the evident reluctance of archbishop Courtenay and his powerful enemies to proceed to extremities with him after this public condemnation. For nearly two years he was allowed to remain in his

* Compare generally Milman: "Latin Christianity," book xiii., chap. vi., and "Fasciculi Zizaniorum Johannis Wyclif cum Tritico," ascribed to Thomas Netter of Walden, Confessor to King Henry V. and Provincial of English Carmelites.

quiet retreat at Lutterworth, where he preached and wrote unweariedly; until the fatal stroke of paralysis on the 29th of December, 1384—which occurred while he was in the act of hearing or celebrating mass—put an end to the wonderful life and labours of the profound scholar, the eloquent and winning preacher, the unwearied writer, and earnest reformer. It was perhaps well that kindly death then took him thus gently home, for his restless enemies were busy preparing a fresh trial for the worn-out and exhausted man. Had he lived, it is more than probable that Wyclif, "like so many of earth's great ones, would only have passed through pain and agony to his well-won rest."

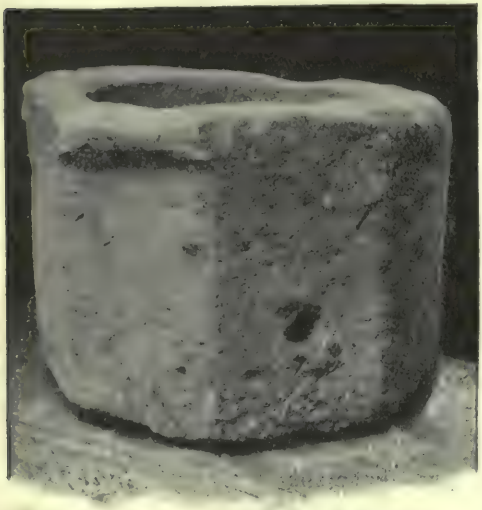
Too scanty are the materials ready to our hand, when we endeavour to give any fair idea of the man who exercised so marvellous an influence over his own generation; who by his works and words sowed the seeds of that Reformation which inspired the Church of England with such marvellous life and divine power, which its very enemies grudgingly acknowledge still lives and works in it, after centuries, with undiminished vitality. "No friendly hand has left us any, even the slightest, memorial of the great reformer." None speak of a commanding person, or even of a winning face. We can only picture to ourselves a Wyclif with a spare, emaciated frame; but in that frail, worn body must have lived a tireless spirit which knew no fear, a conviction (which never faltered) that he was guiding men along the path which alone leads to the City of God. Persevering and unwearied, he never allowed himself rest; unselfish and self-denying, his bitterest foes could find no flaw in his pure and spotless life. Austere even to asceticism, he lived himself the stern, hard life he preached to others with the irresistible earnestness of conviction.

His influence over all sorts and conditions of men was boundless. It reached from the ambitious prince John of Gaunt, to the illiterate, down-trodden peasant. Grave church dignitaries, men immersed in commerce, statesmen, scholars, soldiers, all acknowledged the winning charm, the holy eloquence, the irresistible power, of this strange and gifted man. It would be hard among English worthies to find one who possessed the key of human hearts like Wyclif. "To the memory of one of the greatest of Englishmen his country has been singularly and painfully ungrateful. On most of us the dim image looks down like the portrait of the first of a long line of kings, without personality or expression. He is the first of the reformers. . . . If considered only as the father of English prose, he might claim more reverential treatment than he has received at our hands. It is not by his translation of the Bible, remarkable as that work is, that Wyclif can be judged as a writer. It is in his original tracts, only one or two of which have been printed, that the exquisite pathos, the keen, delicate irony, the manly passion of his short, nervous sentences, fairly overmasters the weakness of the unformed language, and gives us English which cannot be read without a feeling of its beauty to this hour."*

Among scholars he was absolutely the first of his day. In letters he ranks as the

* "Fasciculi Zizaniorum" (Introduction), Rolls Series.

last of the great schoolmen. His industry even in those laborious days was simply amazing. The number of his books—mostly, of course, tracts, but, as we said, tracts lit up with wonderful learning and powerful reasoning—baffles calculation. Two hundred are said to have been burned in the course of the religious troubles in Bohemia. "How much of the



FONT FROM LUTTERWORTH CHURCH.
(*Traditionally of the time of Wyclif. Leicester Museum.*)

translation of the Scriptures he executed himself is not precisely known; but even if in parts only superintended, it was a prodigious achievement for one man, deeply involved as he was in polemic warfare with the hierarchy, the monks, and the mendicant orders. He was acknowledged to be a consummate master in the dialectics of the schools. He was the pride, as well as the terror, of Oxford. He was second to none in philosophy," so writes a monk; "in the discipline of the schools incomparable."*

* Milman: "Latin Christianity," bk. xiii., ch. vi.

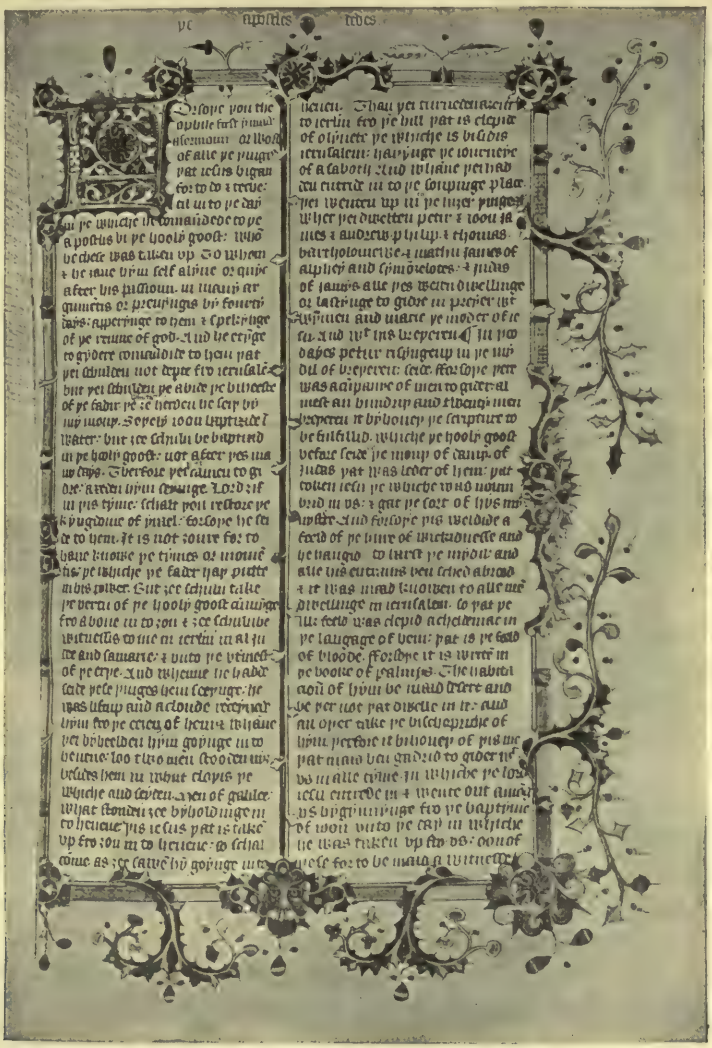
Of his doctrines, his teaching respecting the sacrament of the altar was by far the most important and far-reaching in its final results. It has been well said that "if there was one doctrine upon which the supremacy of the mediæval church rested, it was the doctrine of transubstantiation. It was by his exclusive right to the performance of the miracle which was wrought in the mass, that the lowliest priest was raised high above princes."* The grosser theory of transubstantiation Wyclif emphatically denied in his teaching respecting the spiritual presence in the Holy Eucharist. He followed more or less closely the primitive doctrine taught by the Anglo-Saxon church, before the coming of Lanfranc and the Norman school. "With him the Eucharist is Christ's body spiritually, sacramentally; but the bread and wine are not annihilated by transmutation. They co-exist, though to the mind of the believer the elements are virtually the veritable body and blood of the Redeemer."† In other terms, the material substance of bread and wine remain *after* consecration in the sacrament of the altar. In Wyclif's own words, "We are not to suppose that the body of Christ comes down from heaven to the host consecrated in every church; no, it remains ever fast and secure in heaven. Therefore it has a spiritual presence in the host, not such as can be measured by length or breadth."

His translation of the Bible was not made from the original Hebrew and Greek, but from the Latin (Vulgate) version; and he tells us in his preface

* Green: "History of the English People."
† Dean Milman.

that he was assisted in this work by some of his friends. The price of this Bible was very great, owing to the vast labour

But, in spite of its great cost, it was soon in great request, and copies multiplied with strange rapidity. Wyclif in his



MS. PAGE OF WYCLIF'S BIBLE IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM, CONTAINING THE BEGINNING OF THE "ACTS OF THE APOSTLES." (*Late 14th Century.*)

required in the transcription. The cost of a copy of the Holy Scriptures in Wyclif's version in his own time, would represent about £30 or £40 of our present money.

teaching especially urged the study of the Bible, particularly of the New Testament. "Christian men and women should study fast all the New Testament—should cleave

to the study of it. No simple man of wit," he said, "no man of small knowledge, should be afraid to study immeasurably in the text of Holy Writ." An attempt to suppress this first English translation of the Bible directly after the reformer's death, was quashed by John of Gaunt. This righteous act, and his general support of Wyclif in his life, will ever be remembered by the English people as one of the titles to honour of this ambitious and too often self-seeking prince. Wyclif's Bible was, however, by archbishop Arundel's influence, formally condemned in 1408, by a resolution of Convocation; but this condemnation was never, as some have supposed, confirmed by act of Parliament.

Well-nigh all the errors which had gradually crept in and were sapping the life of mediæval Christianity, and which subsequently were swept away by the Teutonic peoples, who generally adopted the principles of the Reformation, were attacked and condemned by Wyclif: such as pardons, indulgences, excommunications, pilgrimages, and the slavish, unreasoning submission to the Popes of Rome, the source of so much fatal mischief. Images, at least of the Persons of the Trinity, he condemned. But whilst in Wyclif's teaching there was much that was admirable and true, it cannot be denied that many of his views would, if pressed, have assuredly led to anarchy and confusion. He was a destroyer rather than a constructor. He even confessed that his theory of the Divine dominion was put forth as an ideal, but that it was, he felt, incompatible with the existing state of society. In his sweeping condemnation of a church the possessor of wealth and dignity, he proclaimed that it was the duty of the state, the king, or the emperor, to confiscate the whole of these misused, and hence forfeited possessions. He failed to see with what an evil power he was investing fallible and interested men; what an awful incentive he was supplying to human avarice and greed. The deplorable waste, the cruel injustice, the fatal destruction and irreparable ruin, which accompanied and disfigured the Reformation in England, is a sad commentary upon such theories.

The day was to dawn in England when not a little of the teaching of Wyclif would be actually incorporated in the formularies of her church; when the great doctrine of the sacrament of the altar, much as he interpreted it,* would be received and preached by the great divines of her world-wide communion; when the abuses and errors which he abhorred, would be swept for ever out of her ritual and practice. But that day was far distant. For long years after the reformer's death his name was execrated by the church he so passionately desired to purify, and his memory was held up to shame and reproach. In the year 1408 archbishop Arundel, presiding at a synod at Oxford, condemned all Wyclif's writings, and made it heresy to possess any version of the Bible not authorised by the church. The effect of this synodical decision was virtually to proscribe all *English* versions of the Word of God, as no English translation had received such sanction.

* Compare the words of the "Confessio" of Wyclif in the "Fasciculi Zizaniorum." Rolls Series, pp. 115—132.

Two years later, in 1410, the books of the reformer were burned publicly in that Oxford of which he had been so long the pride and ornament. The same archprelate, with an animosity unrelenting as it was ill-judged, applied to Rome for permission to burn his bones; but the Pope, wiser than archbishop Arundel, refused the savage request. However, a few years later the General Council of Constance, in 1415, made the fierce decree which the English archbishop had thought fit to beg for, and in 1428 Pope Martin V. sent an order into England for its execution. To Fleming, bishop of Lincoln, belongs the doubtful honour of having carried out the papal command. The mouldering remains of the great master were exhumed and burnt, and the sacred ashes of the dead were heedlessly tossed into the waters of the little river Swift, a tributary of the Avon, which flows by Wyclif's Lutterworth.

Wyclif as a teacher and reformer stood absolutely alone; he had, of course, a few dear friends and intimate associates, but little more than their names have come down to us. As a master and leader he had no successor. He had founded no sect; nor did he ever dream of such a thing. He had simply wished to reform the life and practice of the church; and in his later years, despairing of effecting this, he specially turned his attention to some of the doctrines taught by the church. His true words bore fruit, as we shall see; but not for many, many years. Although, however, the generation which had known him lived to see the memory of the reformer defamed and disgraced, and his work stamped out, for a considerable number of years after Wyclif's death his opinions maintained their sway over a vast number of persons of all ranks and orders. Especially in towns—London was a conspicuous example—were Wyclif's reformed doctrines strangely popular. Under the uncertain term "Lollards," his disciples were everywhere. We find them even among the clergy. Anne of Bohemia, "Good Queen Anne"—Richard II.'s wife, was attached to Wyclif's teaching, and greatly prized his version of the Scriptures. Barons, burghers, peasants, were reckoned among these Lollards. "Every second person you meet is a Lollard," was a saying of the day. The term "Lollard," in its derivation and exact meaning, is a doubtful one. All we can say of the word with any certainty is, it was a term of opprobrium coined by those whom we must call the church party, and that it generally signified a garrulous, loquacious person.

But from the day of the death of the master at Lutterworth, the Lollard party in England, as a party, were doomed to partial extinction. Various causes, some political—especially mixed up with the hatred of the Avignon (French) Popes—were at work, as we have seen, at first to exaggerate and afterwards to diminish the influence of Wyclif. In considering the story of the Lollards, however, and the reasons for their, comparatively speaking, speedy extinction after his death, we must remember that under the common name of Lollards were gathered every species of religious malcontents, and with them not a few of the discontented class which never dies out in a civilised community, a class which is ever ready for disturbance, revolt, and

revolution. All these availed themselves of the popular name of the so-called followers of the reformer—"Lollard"—and eventually brought the gravest discredit and the profoundest distrust upon the earnest men whose name they adopted, but whose principles they ignored. Crazy Socialist preachers like John Ball, stormy demagogues like Wat Tyler, men who shrank from no excesses which might in their opinion help on their wild schemes, and a little later the political and religious malcontents of the reigns of Henry IV. and Henry V., were roughly lumped together as Lollards, till the very name and all associated with it came to be regarded as a positive danger to the state.

King Henry IV., John of Gaunt's son, who succeeded to the throne of the dethroned Richard II. in 1399, largely influenced by archbishop Arundel, his great supporter in the state troubles which had ended by placing the crown on his head, at the commencement of his reign declared himself the supporter of the church against her dangerous and heretical Lollard foes; and in the second year of his reign king and Parliament, affrighted by the wild and revolutionary views ascribed to all Lollards indifferently, and openly avowed by some, passed the well-known terrible statute, "For the burning of heretics" (*De hæretico comburendo*). At once, armed with the law, the archbishop and his suffragans determined to make examples. The statute had not many victims in the age which passed it; but it is memorable as being the first legal enactment of religious bloodshed. It was a terrible precedent, and bore in time sad and grievous fruit. William Sautre, a parish priest at Lynn, was the first of our religious martyrs. He was condemned as a heretic for the denial of transubstantiation. He recanted, then withdrew his recantation, and eventually as a relapsed heretic was doomed to the flames. Nine years later a layman—John Badby—was also condemned for the same offence against the sacrament of the altar. The dread sentence in his case was carried out in the presence of the Prince of Wales, afterwards the hero-king Henry V. The groans of the sufferer in his great agony were taken by the shuddering prince for a recantation, and Henry ordered the fire to be plucked away; but the proffer of life, and even of a pension, failed to move the martyr spirit of the brave Lollard; the cruel flames were again lighted, and so Badby perished.

All through the reigns of Richard II. and Henry IV. Lollardry lived on. It never really assumed the character of an organised movement, but it had penetrated into every class of society. Women as well as men became its preachers. Lollardry had its schools, its books, its tracts and pamphlets. The opinions of Wyclif, the resolve to substitute personal religion for the old mediæval system which locked up salvation in the hands of the priests, the monks, and the friars, with their absolutions, their pardons, their indulgences, and their anathemas, seemed to be gaining ground everywhere; but mingled with the religious movement were Socialistic dreams, popular outbreaks, revolutionary risings, peasant wars, general discontent. Both the Parliament and the king were thoroughly alarmed, and, as we have seen, were determined to stamp out the party, and to crush all who sympathised with it.

It was in the reign of Henry V. (1413–1422) that the Lollard movement was finally crushed. The story of the last act of the tragedy is a confused one, and much in it remains uncertain and obscure. A gallant and successful soldier, a Sir John Oldcastle, who had served with great distinction in the French wars, through a marriage with a noble and wealthy widow had become Lord Cobham. As is often the case with soldiers, the man-at-arms became a devoted and earnest religious man. He put himself at the head of the religious Lollards, sheltered their proscribed preachers in his strong castle of Cowling, near Rochester, and treated the citations and excommunications of the archbishop with contempt. Lord Cobham was subsequently arrested by the king's order, tried before an ecclesiastical tribunal presided over by archbishop Arundel, and by it condemned. He made his escape, strangely enough, from the Tower, and immediately afterwards we hear of a great Lollard plot. There was no rising, no rebellion, but the so-called plot was followed by the execution of some thirty-nine prominent Lollards, and the law against heretics was made yet more severe. Cobham was lost sight of for some time—three or four years—but in the year 1418 was again arrested and dealt with as a traitor and heretic. He was

Photo: J. T. Sandell, Thornton Heath.

THE LOLLARDS' PRISON, LAMBETH PALACE.

hanged on a gallows erected in St. Giles's fields, then on the outskirts of London, and slowly burnt. Refusing the aid of a priest, he said "he would confess to God only, now as ever present, and of Him alone entreat pardon." His last words, heard amidst the crackling of the flames, were praise of God. "His conduct was throughout that of a noble religious man."

Thus was Lollardism, as a political movement, effectively stamped out. That it lingered, however, long afterwards among the English people, and helped to prepare men's minds for the events of the following century, is indisputable. The teaching of Wyclif was never forgotten. The Lollard persecution of the reign of Henry V., which virtually ended with the death of Lord Cobham, was, so far as the confused and contradictory statements can be unravelled, the work of Arundel and his successor in the primacy, largely prompted by the hatred of Rome and the hierarchy to the principles of Wyclif. It is very doubtful if the charge of treason and of attempted rebellion, in the case of Cobham and his friends, was based on fact.*

One striking result of the suppression of Lollardism by the strong arm of the law deserves to be especially recorded. Oxford for a century and a half had been one of the greatest centres of literature and of intellectual life, and during the last half of the fourteenth century, when the reputation of Paris as a great seat of learning faded, during the period of the Avignon Popes, had become first amongst all the European homes of letters. In Oxford Lollardism and the influence of Wyclif was effectually stamped out, through the measures of archbishops Courtenay and Arundel and their party in the church. During the century (the fifteenth) which followed, the decay of Oxford as a university was complete. Religious freedom was killed in the home where the great schoolmen and their last distinguished representative—Wyclif—had taught and written; but the agents of Rome and her so-called orthodoxy had killed something more than religious freedom. A death-like torpor settled for a long and dreary period over Oxford and her famous school.

In another direction the far-reaching influence of Wyclif had made itself felt. We have briefly related how, during the reigns of Henry IV. and his son, the Parliament and the sovereign had shown their bitter hostility to the Lollard party, regarding it as a political as well as a religious movement. But while the Lollard was an object of distrust and dislike to Parliament, we find even there unmistakable traces of the work of Wyclif. Deep indeed had his teaching sunk into the hearts of the men who composed the great national assembly. The same Parliament which showed itself hostile to the Lollards, disliked and even hated the church. Jealousy and hatred of Rome and all foreign influences, and an intense mistrust of the Rome-ridden Church of England, showed itself plainly in their acts, still more in their temper and openly expressed wishes. In the fourth year of king Henry IV. (A.D. 1403) petitions were presented that all monks of French origin should be expelled from the country, and that all priories held by foreigners should

* Compare Milman: "Latin Christianity," book xiii., chap. vii.

be seized. In the year 1407 the Commons even suggested a general confiscation of church property, presenting a carefully prepared schedule showing what a vast lay-provision could be made out of the temporal possessions of the bishops, abbots, and priors, now idly wasted. The king peremptorily forbade a discussion of such "high matters." But this ominous foreshadowing of what actually took place a little more than a century later, shows us at least what was in the minds of not a few of the leading personages of the Parliament of Henry IV. in the first years of the fifteenth century.

Can we marvel at the deep-rooted distrust of the church at this period, or be surprised that the words of the dead and anathematised Wyclif were treasured in many English hearts? *For Rome had learned nothing.* The lesson of the repeated enactment of the great anti-papal Acts of Parliament, of "Provisors" and "Præmunire," was, if not forgotten, at least ignored by the Pope and his advisers. The marvellous popularity of Wyclif and his earnestly pressed reforms, was treated as though it existed not. Pope Boniface IX., who reigned as head of the church A.D. 1389–1404, in his unholy acts went further than any of his predecessors. It was this Boniface who, to fill his treasure coffers, to supply the needs of his exchequer, to furnish funds for the perpetual intrigues of the Papacy, dared to establish the precedent of an indiscriminate sale of plenary indulgences. A jubilee festival was announced at Rome. Special privileges of pardon and remission of sins were offered to all those who would make a pilgrimage to Rome; while in England the Pope's accredited agents appeared, and actually offered for *money* the same privileges which a pilgrim to Rome might win. "Confession and penance even were not asked for—a money payment was all that was required. By the side of the altar in all the chief churches a table was spread covered with scarlet cloth, where this unholy traffic was carried on."*

* Dean Hook: "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury."

LUTTERWORTH CHURCH. *Photo: Taunt & Co., Oxford.*

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE THREE LANCASTRIAN KINGS. THE SHADOW OF ROME.

The Two Great Lancastrians—Decay of the Crusades—Long Minority of Henry VI.—Absence of Great Characters in either Church or State—Cardinal Beaufort—The Wars of the Roses—Extinction of the English Baronage—The Church and the Crown—Apparent Power and Wealth of the Church—Real Weakness from various Causes—Abuses and Superstitions—Bishop Pecock—His Fall—His Defence of Mediæval and Roman Customs and Superstitions—In reality an Unimpeachable Exposure of them—Growing Incubus of the Roman Supremacy—Culmination in the System of Legates—Papal Appeals—Fees and Exactions—Selling of Pardons.

THE three successive monarchs, Henry IV., Henry V., and Henry VI., were, in their way, each of them religious men. The last, we know, has even left behind him the reputation of a saint, and, although one of the most unfortunate and unhappy of our kings, is ever tenderly treated in the usually chilly and unemotional verdict of posterity. Henry IV. was, during his reign, in the closest alliance with the clergy, and maintained until his death a high reputation as a brave knight and strictly moral man. During the Lollard fever he was faithful to the church, lending no ear to the charges — some based on truth, others grossly exaggerated — which the Lollard reformers were never weary of making against the established order of ecclesiastical government. Indeed, Henry IV. and his more famous son and successor viewed Lollardism rather as a disturbing influence affecting civil government, than as a serious scheme of religious reform.

Even so late as the first half of the fifteenth century, the Crusading fever, which had more or less disturbed the minds of earnest and religious men since the days of William the Conqueror—a period of nearly three centuries and a half—had not exhausted itself, and was one of the influences at work in the lives of Henry IV. and of his son. Both father and son hoped to die as Crusaders. Henry IV., who in his latter days evidently looked back upon the deposition of Richard II., and upon all that followed that act, with bitter remorse, made considerable preparations for the Crusade which he intended as an atonement for his great sin. The galleys which were to convey the English king and part at least of his army, were, it is said, in readiness, when his fatal illness seized him, while actually praying in Westminster Abbey for the success of his Crusading venture. Henry V. too, dying in his hour of triumph, the greatest king in Christendom, almost with his last breath professed himself a Crusader. "As surely as I expect to die," were amongst his last words, "I intended, after I had established peace in France, to go and conquer Jerusalem, if it had been the good pleasure of my Creator to have let me live my due time." It was only with these two powerful sovereigns that there passed away in England the strange Crusading passion which had fired the hearts of so many

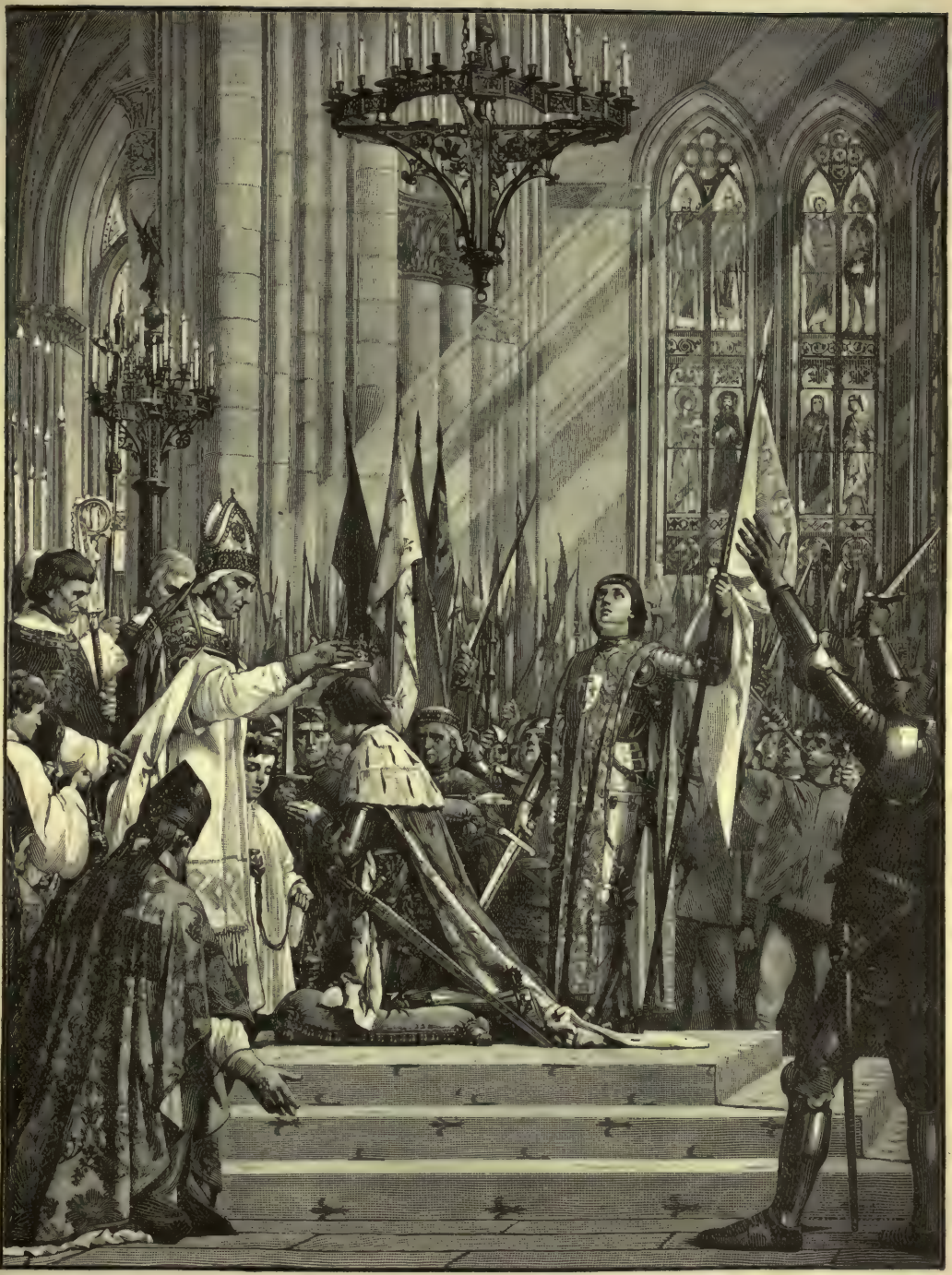


Photo: Neurdin, Paris.

JOAN OF ARC AT THE CORONATION OF CHARLES VII.

(From the mural painting by J. E. Lenepveu, in the Panthéon, Paris.)

royal and distinguished persons all through the Middle Ages, which were now fast closing.

With the death of Henry V., in A.D. 1422, commenced a disastrous and confused period for England, both in church and state. The premature removal by death of the victor of Agincourt was a grave misfortune for the Church of England as then constituted; for after he became king he had shown himself an example of an austere piety such as few of his predecessors had displayed, and he was, besides, the most bitter enemy in Europe of the followers of Wyclif and the Lollards. After his premature death, however, all was changed; and the new views in religious matters were no longer sternly repressed, but gradually continued to gain ground among the people. During the long reign of Henry VI. and his three successors, no really distinguished churchman arose far-sighted enough to see the weakness, and, indeed, the decaying state of that church which seemed outwardly so powerful and magnificent; who could discern that the hearts of the English people were being gradually alienated from the orthodox religious teachers. The leading ecclesiastics were, for the most part, statesmen rather than theologians. A long minority, the selfish disputes of the princes and the Lords of the Council, followed by a long and ruthless war, was a disastrous time for the mediæval Church of England; and the kings who followed—Edward IV., Richard III., and Henry VII.—were not in earnest in matters of church reform. Thus the old errors in teaching remained unchecked, becoming every year more apparent. The old machinery was left to itself, the old abuses were uncorrected, and no efforts were made to improve an organisation which had been effectual and efficient in past times to control and to guide. The new learning, the invention of printing, the great awakening of the people under Wyclif and his disciples—all these things were ignored by the men to whom the charge of the church was entrusted. The century (the fifteenth) which followed the death of Henry V. was, in fact, a continual preparation for the great upheaval in the reign of Henry VIII.

Had one really great churchman appeared in England during that age of decay, he would have seen the danger looming in the future, and would assuredly have taken some steps to ward it off—would have devised some means by which the people's hearts might have been regained. But one and all of the leaders of the hierarchy during this period were serenely unconscious of the real state of things, so that the awakening in the days of Henry VIII. was indeed a rude one.

A few paragraphs will be sufficient to indicate the changes which followed upon the death of Henry V. in England. The conquests of the warrior king had placed France literally at the feet of the English nation. It was, however, an unnatural state of things; and when the great soldier and statesman had passed away, the dream of Henry V. to unite the two nations was soon seen to have been merely a dream. The heir to the double crown of England and France—Henry VI.—was a child, and the government at once really passed into the hands of the two brothers of the dead

NUNS IN CHOIR.

(From a 15th-century Psalter made for the use of Henry VI. as a boy, and now in the British Museum.)

king, the dukes of Bedford and Gloucester. Bedford remained generally in France, and Gloucester, with a restraining council of nobles, attempted to rule in England. The two dukes have been well described: Bedford as "possessing all the high qualities of his dead brother Henry, without his brilliance; and Gloucester as the heir of all Henry's popular characteristics, without any of his greatness."

The romantic story of the warrior king is without parallel in English annals. At once religious in temperament, pure in life, a valiant and successful soldier, a wise and cautious ruler of men, when he died —comparatively young—he had virtually conquered France; had his life been prolonged, he might have consolidated his vast conquests. But he left no successor; and the story of the years which followed his death is simply the chronicle of successive defeats, which gradually weakened the prestige of the English nation abroad, and in the end determined the English government to abandon all their pretensions and claims in French territory. The account of the English wars in France between 1422 and 1453, and the romantic episode of the career of Joan of Arc—"the one pure figure," as she has been truly termed, "which rises out of the greed, the lust, the selfishness and unbelief of the age"—does not belong to this History of the Church. It is sufficient to say that before the year 1453 had run its course the English had been finally expelled from the soil of France. The French wars, which, with little intermission, had lasted a hundred years, were ended; and, in spite of the splendid victories of Edward III., the Black Prince, and Henry V., nothing was left to England of her French possessions save the town and harbour of Calais. Even the great southern provinces of Aquitaine and Guienne, which had been in the hands of the English ever since the marriage of the duchess Eleanor to Henry II., passed for ever from England into the possession of the French sovereign.

At home, during the thirty years which witnessed the gradual extinction of English hopes for the permanent subjugation of France, the government was weak and divided. During the long minority of Henry VI. the royal authority was vested in a council made up of powerful barons and ecclesiastics, at the head of whom stood Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, a legitimated son of John of Gaunt, and consequently a great-uncle of the child-king. The principal person in England, the duke of Gloucester, through his ambitious, selfish schemes and perpetual intrigues, his utter lack of principle, and his profligate life, was a continual menace to the realm. This long minority of Henry VI. was an unfortunate period. No prominent and wise statesman appeared to guide and direct home affairs. The nobles were lawless and dissolute, and the Parliaments of this time have been described as mere assemblies of the retainers and partisans of these self-seeking nobles. The church, of which we must treat in more detail presently, lacked enthusiasm and spirituality. English literature was just then at its lowest ebb. There were no historians worth the name, no poets, no kindly satirists.

The story of the young king, heir to so many hopes, as he grew up towards manhood, is a sad one. Weak in health from

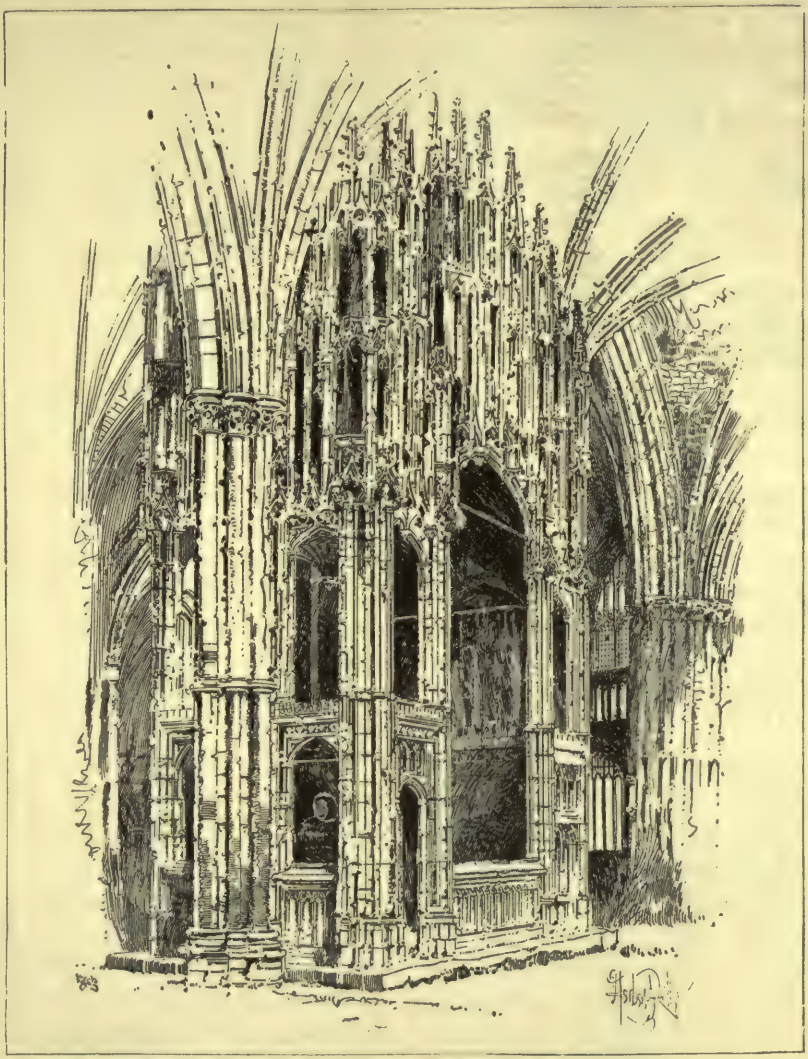
his earliest days, ever unfit to take part in the military matters which formed so large a part of a young prince's or noble's life in that age of war and perpetual fighting, he took a lively interest in all scholarly pursuits. His over-zealous guardians evidently pressed him imprudently, and he grew up weak and sickly, and a somewhat precocious scholar. We hear of letters written under his direction while still a boy, petitioning for the canonisation of king Alfred. At an age when hawking or tilting should have made up the chief interests of a youthful life, the young king was meditating upon the grave ecclesiastical discussions of the Council of Basle. At the age of eighteen his educational foundations at Eton and Cambridge first took shape, and were ever, all through his long reign, carefully watched and developed. From a very early date in that sad life, questions of statecraft were discussed in his presence It was remembered that he was the king, and the gravest and most important decisions affecting the weal of England and of France were submitted to the boy-sovereign, though perhaps not decided by him. The spectacle of a divided council, of jealous princes, of ministers pressing the adoption of contradictory policies, was ever before him. Was it to be wondered at that an incurable insanity was developed at a comparatively early period of his unhappy reign?

The pathetic misfortunes, quite undeserved, of Henry VI., his mysterious death, after years of sorrow, in the Tower—a death probably the cruel act of his great enemy and successful rival—made a lasting impression on the English people. He was for long revered as as saint, and narrowly missed being canonised. Prayers were offered in his honour, hymns were sung in his praise; and the common folk long loved the memory of the saintly, generous, scholarly king who survived power, wealth, and dignity, who saw all his friends perish round him, and last of all his bright, chivalrous son, prince Edward of Wales. A more unfit king than Henry VI., however, could not well be imagined for that unhappy period which culminated in the terrible dynastic War of the Roses.

One by one the prominent figures of the age of the minority of Henry passed away. Bedford, by far the noblest and the best of those who guided the fortunes of England when the strong hand of the conqueror of Agincourt was removed, went first. Thwarted by the intrigues of his brother of Gloucester at home, confronted in France by the splendid spirit of patriotism and national defence evoked by Joan of Arc, the duke of Bedford, prematurely worn out and dispirited, died in 1435.

Cardinal Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, when Bedford had passed away, became indisputably the most influential man in England. His policy was to make peace with victorious France. He would have England renounce what had now become hopeless pretensions; he would close a war which was draining the country of her best men and treasures. But again the duke of Gloucester was the determined opponent of the peace party in England. So the French war dragged on, every year more disastrous in its consequences. The sudden death of Gloucester in 1447 startled the country; and grave, though most

probably unfounded suspicions that the death of the turbulent and ill-advised prince was the work of Beaufort, were current; but the suspicions were hushed by the death of Beaufort himself only a few weeks after the disappearance of his turbulent and selfish rival from the scene. The cardinal bishop expired calmly and with dignity in his Wolvesey palace at Winchester; and king Henry VI.'s kindly words when he heard of the minister's death were Beaufort's well-deserved epitaph: "My uncle was very dear to me, and did much kindness to me while he lived. The Lord reward him."



CARDINAL BEAUFORT'S CHANTRY, WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL.

Cardinal Beaufort was a good example of the statesman-ecclesiastic of the Middle Ages; an ambitious, secular prelate, ostentatious, somewhat unscrupulous, jealous of the privileges of his order, but certainly unspiritual; on the whole, like so many other leading churchmen of his time, a better statesman than ecclesiastic. He was by no means one who would be likely to lift his church out of the many perils by which it was surrounded; indeed, men of his stamp were utterly unconscious that their church was fast losing its hold on the affections of the people. But, considering the difficulties of his position, Beaufort had been, on the whole, a wise and loyal statesman. From the moment of his death everything in England went worse and worse for the poor king.

The chief power now fell into the hands of the advisers of Henry's foreign queen, the beautiful but unfortunate Margaret of Anjou. The war with France went on until, as we have seen, England was driven completely out of the country she had claimed to reign over, and where for a brief season she seemed supreme. The unfortunate close of the long French war exasperated popular feeling against the government of Margaret of Anjou, who in the name of the king (whose mental powers were ever and anon completely clouded over) carried on the government. These terrible French disasters prominently brought to the front a formidable claimant to the crown in the person of Richard, duke of York, who boasted a double descent from Edward III., being descended on the mother's side from Lionel, duke of Clarence, son of Edward III. (this Lionel was older than John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, the ancestor of Henry VI.), and on the father's side from another son of Edward III., Edmond Langley, duke of York. Richard of York, taking advantage of the continued and indeed hopeless illness of king Henry VI. and the hatred with which the government of the queen was regarded by the nation, caused himself to be appointed protector of the realm in 1454. Then commenced the long-drawn-out "War of the Roses" between the houses of York and Lancaster. From 1455 to 1471 England was harassed by this bloody war between the rival dynasties.

It was a period of ruthless battles, cruel executions, and wholesale confiscations; but one remarkable feature deserves especial comment. The ruin and bloodshed were mainly confined to the great lords and their families and their feudal retainers. Generally speaking, the trading and agricultural classes stood apart from the deadly struggle, and the towns suffered but little. In the fifth year of the war (in 1460) the cruel reprisals which followed the victory of Wakefield, won by the Lancastrian partisans of Henry VI. and his queen, gave the keynote to the conduct of the fierce struggle. Richard, duke of York, was slain, and his head, crowned in mockery with a paper diadem, was impaled on the walls of the city of York. A series of bloody executions followed this victory of the house of Lancaster. The fortune of war, however, changed in the following year, when a crushing victory gained by the Yorkists at Towton gave the crown of England to Edward, the son and heir of duke Richard of York, whose head had been fixed in derision on the walls of the northern capital; and a vast bill of attainder

confiscated the estates of the leaders of the party of the Lancastrian king. But the struggle was not yet over; for ten more years the record of plots, invasions, treacheries, executions, confiscations, disfigure the annals of English history.

The year 1471, however, witnessed the end of the awful and bitter civil war. Two decisive victories of Edward of York, known as Edward IV.—the one near London, at Barnet; the other under the shadow of the famous Norman abbey of Tewkesbury in the Severn vale—for ever crushed the Lancastrian party. These victories were immediately followed by the murder of Henry's brave son and heir, the prince of Wales; and shortly after the death of Henry VI. in the Tower removed the last hope of the house of Lancaster. More executions, confiscations, and banishments completed the dreary record of the "Roses" war, and henceforth Edward IV. of York reigned as undisputed king.

The result of the deadly struggle which had lasted for so many years was now apparent. *The baronage of England was almost wiped out.* The power of the crown was thus enormously augmented. The vast confiscations of the estates of the partisans of the crushed Lancastrians had enriched the king, and rendered him comparatively independent of Parliamentary grants. The powerful nobles, who for so many centuries had resisted the arbitrary power of the sovereign, existed no longer. The order was virtually extinguished. The class made up of the smaller landowners and the traders, gradually growing into the Commons, was as yet politically impotent. The church alone remained as a power to be reckoned with, as capable of offering any resistance to the overpowering influence of the sovereign. And the church, imposing from its vast and varied possessions, its immemorial traditions, its learning, and its spiritual claims, was really weak from its lack of spiritual earnestness, from its want of eminent and devoted men who could guide its counsels. Above all, the church from various causes had lost much of its hold upon the hearts of the people.*

In this rapid bird's-eye view of the civil history of England during the three Lancastrian reigns of the descendants of John of Gaunt, the famous son of Edward III., we have spoken briefly of the kings and princes of the fifteenth century, of their wars abroad and at home. The brilliant figure of one of our national heroes, and the pathetic figure of one of the royal saints, have passed before us. We have seen how France was conquered by English arms, and almost as quickly lost through "the splendid heroism of a peasant girl." We have shortly told the strange and blood-stained romance of the wiping-out of the historic baronage of England, and the consequent elevation of the wearer of the crown to a position of almost undisputed and absolute authority. What now of the Church of England during this exciting, war-filled period? Let us proceed to consider the position which it held towards the lay-world outside, and strive to paint something of its inner life in the days when Henry IV., Henry V., and Henry VI. were kings, and when

* See for above general historical sketch Bishop Stubbs: "Constitutional History of England," chaps. xviii.–xix.; and Green: "History of English People," chap. v., sect. vi., and chap. vi., sect. i.

Edward IV., the White Rose chieftain, entered into and enjoyed without a rival his splendid heritage.

In these years of the century which immediately preceded the momentous events of its Reformation, the church was, outwardly at least, powerful; it was certainly an imposing and wealthy community. The

PORTION OF A PAGE FROM THE "CHICHELE BREVIARY."
The miniature in the initial represents the Consecration of a Church. (*Lambeth Palace Library.*)

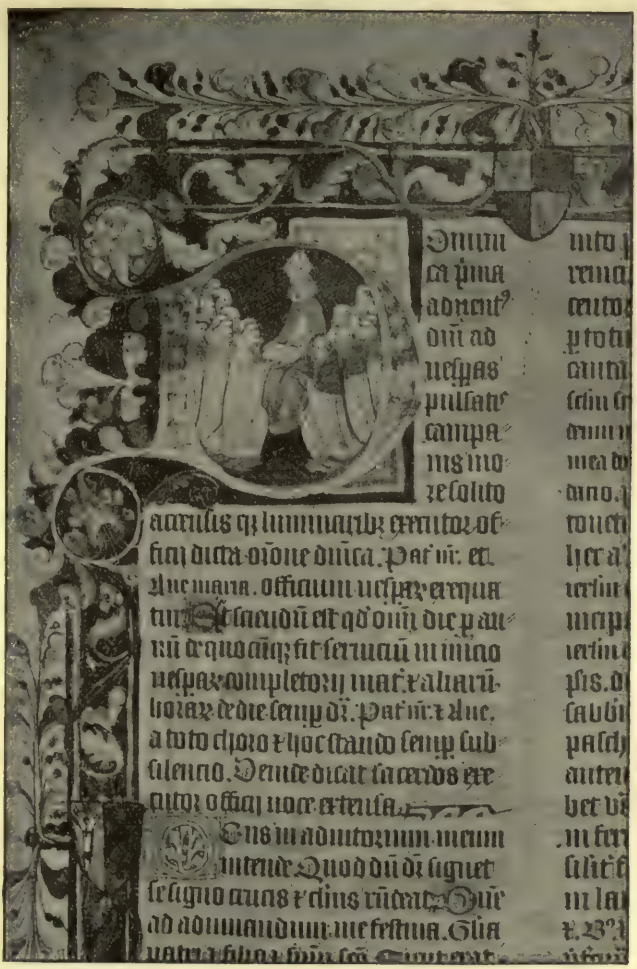
ecclesiastical order furnished, with rare exceptions, the great ministers of state, such as the chancellor, the privy seal, and treasurer; churchmen were very frequently employed, too, in important foreign missions. Their training, their wide learning, and more especially their great knowledge of law, in an age when learning and literary knowledge were, comparatively speaking, rare, naturally pointed to ecclesiastics as the fittest persons for holding such offices, and for discharging the difficult and complicated duties connected with them. This constant presence of clergy at the royal council board was, no doubt, a considerable source of strength to the ecclesiastical order; for although it is true that the obligations of holy orders in many instances lay lightly on the churchman who filled the position of minister of state or official of the chancery, "when it came to a question of class privilege or immunity, he knew when and how to take a side with his brethren . . . The clergy were strong in corporate feeling." *

To take a few conspicuous examples of distinguished clergy filling the highest offices in the state. Henry Chichele, archbishop of Canterbury (1414–1443), was an eminent lawyer and statesman, and acted as prime minister to king Henry V. His predecessor at Canterbury, while bishop of Ely, had held the great seal. John Stafford, archbishop of Canterbury (1443–1452), had filled the offices of high treasurer and chancellor. John Kemp, archbishop of Canterbury (1452–1454), was an eminent lawyer and a distinguished statesman; he, too, was chancellor. There is, however, no doubt but that the fact of proficiency in legal studies and ability in statecraft being invariably a stepping-stone to the highest preferments gravely militated against the spirituality of the hierarchy. It was the lawyer and the statesman, rather than the theologian or the pastor, who was advanced to the high places in the government and administration of the church.

The numbers of the clergy, taking into

* Stubbs: "Constitutional History," chap. xix.

account the comparative smallness of the numbers of the whole population of England at this period, were enormous; but these very numbers, paradoxical though it may seem, were an element of weakness rather than of strength to the church. The population of England had been largely diminished by the great plague of 1349 and by subsequent visitations of the same fatal sickness. We have lists of persons ordained in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries still extant in the bishops' registers. Ordinations were held at least four times a year, and the number admitted on each occasion was rarely below a hundred; and this number was often greatly exceeded. For instance, we find in 1370 bishop Courtenay, acting for the bishop of Exeter, ordained at Tiverton as many as 374 persons. We read of such numbers as 463 ordained at Cirencester on one occasion in 1314; at Worcester in the same year, 310; at Tewkesbury in 1338 (on June 6th), the enormous number of 613. These crowds included acolytes, sub-deacons, deacons, and priests.*



PORTION OF A PAGE FROM THE "CHICHELE BREVIARY" AT LAMBETH PALACE. (ENGLISH EARLY 15TH CENTURY.)*
(These pages have been reproduced by special permission of the Archbishop of Canterbury.)

The question confronts us—What occupation was found for all these ordained clergy, the whole number of the parish churches being not much over 8,000? Some, of course, were monks in the many religious houses. Very many were ordained on the title or chaplains, on the proof that they

* See for further details, Stubbs's "Constitutional History," chaps. xix.–xxi.

* The miniature represents a bishop catechising or expounding to his priests. The coat of arms in the left hand bottom corner is that of Archbishop Chichele.

were entitled to pensions from private persons for saying masses for the dead. Apparently the majority of persons ordained had neither cure of souls nor duty of preaching; their spiritual work seems to have been simply to say masses for the dead. "They were not drawn on by the necessities of self-culture either to deeper study of divine truth, or to the lessons which are derived from the obligation to instruct others, and they lay under no responsibility as bound to sympathise with and guide the weak. . . . By the necessity of celibacy they were cut off from the interests of domestic life, relieved from the obligation to labour for wives and families of their own, and thus left at leisure for mischief of various sorts. Every town contained thus a number of idle men, whose religious duties filled but a small portion of their time, and whose standard of moral conduct was formed upon a very low ideal." * There is no doubt but that this crowd of unemployed, and in many instances disreputable priests, which men like More in the sixteenth century viewed with unveiled dislike and contempt, was one of the grave sources of the weakness of the church in the era of the Reformation, owing to the discredit which this numerous class brought upon the whole order of the clergy.

In the fifteenth century the church possessed vast wealth. The clergy, as a body, were very rich, the proportion of direct taxation borne by them amounting to nearly a third of the whole direct taxation of the nation. The landed estates of the bishops, of the cathedrals, and of the monastic communities extended into nearly every parish, and the tithes and voluntary offerings which maintained the beneficed clergy were even a larger source of revenue than the lands. This wealth constantly excited feelings of jealousy. The violent attack by Parliament on the possessions of the church in the time of Henry IV., already noticed, is an extreme instance of this jealousy, and is an index to the feelings with which this ecclesiastical wealth was regarded by many among the laymen. The bitter Lollard denunciations of the temporalities of the church, which found favour with many in all classes and orders, ill-judged and exaggerated though such denunciations often were, shows us how deeply this feeling had been excited by the accumulation of riches on the part of one privileged order in the state.

Yet these abuses, many and grave though they were, must by no means blind us to the noble work done and healthy influence exercised by the mediæval church. With rare exceptions, the higher classes of the clergy were composed of men of high and stainless character. The learning possessed by the nation was largely in the hands of the ecclesiastical order, and not a little pains was directed to secure educated men even among the minor orders of the clergy. A careful examination was exacted from every candidate for ordination. The bishop who wittingly ordained an ignorant person was guilty of deadly sin. The humanising influence of the monastic and secular clergy in that rough age of perpetual war and struggle was incalculable; and the steady friendship of such able and masterful kings as Henry IV. and Henry V. to the church, shows us how deeply conscious

* Bishop Stubbs.

the rulers of England were of the vast benefits derived by the nation as a whole from the work and influence of the ecclesiastical order. These powerful and far-seeing monarchs were well aware that, on the whole, the power and influence of the church were not selfishly used. Henry IV. was the constant protector of the church, alike from the violent and drastic reforms insisted upon by the Lollards, as from the covetous and jealous demands pressed upon him by the barons and Commons in Parliament assembled. He saw through the exaggerated complaints of the reformers; and, popular though these reformers were among men of all sorts and conditions, he declined to listen to their clamours, and even threw the protective shadow of his great authority over the established religion of England, branding the enemies of the church as heretics. Henry V., the hero and statesman, one of the wisest and best of our kings, was ever the friend of the clergy, and was a faithful and devout churchman. In the midst of his work-filled life we read of him as confessing every week, as accustomed to frequent the daily service of the church, making it a rule to come before the service began, and never leaving before the office was concluded.

As regards what may be termed the inner life of the church, under archbishop Chichele, fresh and stringent regulations were passed by Convocation against marriage among the clergy. The perpetual series of enactments framed by the mediæval Church of England on this question of celibacy, shows us how stoutly the rule was resisted and evaded among the rank and file of ordained persons. No married clerk, according to the fifteenth-century enactment, might exercise any spiritual jurisdiction whatever, and anything which should be done by a married clerk was pronounced to be null and void. Stern laws were also passed in the Convocations of 1415 and 1416 against heresy, the Lollards being specially referred to. Men of good repute in every deanery or parish were sworn to denounce all suspected persons—that is to say, all who held private conventicles, or who differed in their lives and manners from the generality of the faithful. Books written in the vulgar—that is, the English—tongue were to be regarded as suspicious, and were therefore to be seized.

Among minor matters, some interesting regulations of archbishop Chichele are extant, fixing the fees to be received by bishops, archdeacons, and their officers, from clerks, for institution and induction into benefices; the amount of these fees, however, translated into money of our day, was considerable. It was especially provided that no gratuity or demand whatever was to be made for ordination. Great care was evidently taken in the examination of the vast numbers who sought for holy orders. Every step that was taken from the lower to the higher grades of the ministry was guarded by a careful test of the candidate's proficiency in grammar (which covered a broad field) and in ritual. Even a bishop-elect might be rejected by the archbishop for literary deficiency. Various instances occurred of even a bishop being rejected on these grounds; but, on the whole, in the mediæval Church of England the cases of proved incompetence in the higher grades

are few. In 1432 Chichele issued a constitution rendering it imperative for persons in high ecclesiastical positions to be graduates at one or other of the universities.

Among the superstitions which were swept away at the Reformation, the cult of and foolish reverence for saints was very marked in the fifteenth century. After Agincourt, Henry V., on his return to England, paid a state visit to Canterbury, and worshipped at the shrine of St. Thomas Becket. The famous warrior king, believing that St. George, the patron saint of England, had fought at Agincourt for his army, desired that new honours should be conferred on this saint. The Yorkshiremen who fought in the battle averred solemnly that they had seen their Yorkshire saint, John of Beverley, fighting by their side; while other Yorkshiremen who had stayed at home swore that at the very time the bloody fight took place holy oil flowed by drops, like sweat, out of his tomb. Special services were therefore decreed in honour of this ancient English saint, John of Beverley.

A yet more curious and interesting insight into the inner life and opinions of the church between 1425 and 1459, when Henry VI. was king, is obtained from the writings which have come down to us of one Reginald Pecock, a fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, and successively bishop of St. Asaph and of Chichester. Pecock was a Welshman by birth. He became a most industrious and successful student at Oxford, whence he proceeded to London, and obtained at an early age good preferment. His London work brought him into contact with the Lollards, who, although they had ceased to be a political power, seem to have permeated England with their reforming views. Of these heretics—for they ranked as such with the hierarchy of the Church of England—Pecock was the determined adversary, and his most famous works are largely taken up with refuting their opinions and conclusions.

Pecock became, comparatively early in life, acquainted with the powerful and intriguing uncle of the king, Humphry, duke of Gloucester, who, as we have seen, during the long minority of Henry VI. exercised great power as one of the council of state, and subsequently as protector of the kingdom. Through his influence, Pecock was elevated to the bishopric of St. Asaph. As an able and learned controversialist and defender of the established order of things in the church, the bishop of St. Asaph acquired a great fame. As a vehement advocate of the Roman supremacy, he no doubt stirred up much enmity, the pretensions of Rome being at this period already much discredited in England. As most of our accounts of this great man have proceeded from hostile writers, there is considerable difficulty in tracing the sources of the deep-seated hostility which eventually ruined his life. While, on the one hand, he was the vehement supporter of Rome and the ardent defender of his order, and the skilful apologist, as we shall see, of many of the abuses and superstitions which had excited the indignation of the Lollards and reformers of his time; on the other, he bitterly offended the powerful mendicant orders by exposing the grave faults and errors which disfigured their system.

But his ruin and fall seem, in great measure, to have been owing to political reasons. When the duke of Gloucester died, bishop Pecock still preserved the friendship of powerful patrons in the church and state; and the duke of Suffolk —who, after the death of the duke of Gloucester, became, through queen Margaret of Anjou's favour, chief minister— advanced Pecock to the bishopric of Chichester. But Suffolk was eventually assassinated; and Pecock was then left without any eminent patron. We now find him charged with advancing heretical opinions—a charge apparently altogether without real foundation. His writings had stirred up many enemies; and probably, as the friend of Gloucester, and later of Suffolk and of the queen, he had been mixed up in many of the state

PREACHING AT ST. PAUL'S CROSS (EARLY 17TH CENTURY).
(*From a print in the British Museum.*)

intrigues that accompanied the disputes which culminated in the Wars of the Roses. The Pope intervened in his favour, but fruitlessly. As bishop of Chichester, he was formally cited before a council under archbishop Bourchier, and passages in his writings were adduced as proofs of his being a heretic. It was in vain that he defended himself: his enemies were too powerful; and the archbishop offered him the choice between making a public abjuration of his errors, or being delivered, after degradation, to the secular arm "as the food of fire and fuel for the burning." Pecock, the brilliant scholar and controversialist, but apparently rather the political prelate than the earnest bishop, was not of the stuff of which martyrs are made. He became terrified, and elected to abjure heresies he had never advocated, or probably even dreamed of, and publicly burned the three folios and eleven quartos of his own composition. But his somewhat pusillanimous surrender availed him but little. He was deprived of his bishopric, and relegated to a kind of state imprisonment in the abbey of Thorney in Cambridgeshire, where he died some time after, in the year 1459.

No portrait of this scholar and writer, by far the most eminent and learned bishop of the Church of England of his time, now exists, but he is said to have been a man of stately figure and handsome features. We have dwelt thus upon his singular fortunes, because from his writings we obtain an interesting and contemporary picture of the church of the fifteenth century, with its errors and shortcomings; a picture drawn by its most learned prelate—by one who devoted his great powers especially to its defence. From the curious side-lights thrown by bishop Pecock's defence on some of the ways and tenets of the church of which he was so distinguished a member, we shall see how sorely needed were the purifying fires of the Reformation of the next century. The very ability of the apology throws a darker shadow upon the doctrinal errors and superstitious customs for which he so earnestly pleaded.

In the year 1447 bishop Pecock preached a celebrated sermon at St. Paul's Cross, in which he took upon himself the task of defending certain abuses in the church which had attracted considerable public attention. Of late preaching had been much neglected. The bishops were especially charged with looking upon the duty of preaching as something beneath their dignity—as an occupation fit only for the inferior clergy. Archbishop Arundel, in the reign of Henry V., had further discouraged preaching altogether, owing, it is said, to the spread of Lollard opinions among the clergy. Pecock in his Paul's Cross sermon defended the bishops, asserting that their order ought to be considered free from the burden of preaching, as having more important duties to perform in the way of general supervision. In the same discourse he attempted to vindicate the non-residence of many of the bishops in their dioceses, a practice then only too common (and against which exception had lately been taken by the reforming party), on the ground that there were many causes which would justify such non-residence in the sight of God, alluding no doubt to the very general employment of

prelates in state matters at home, and in the royal service abroad as ambassadors.

Bishop Pecock also touched upon the vexed question of papal bulls of provision, by which a clergyman might be appointed by the Pope to a piece of preferment before it was actually vacant, and for which papal provision a considerable fee was generally paid by the candidate thus provided for to the papal court. Pecock pleaded that the Pope, as lord paramount of the universal church and of all things thereto appertaining, had a right, if he chose to claim it, to the entire proceeds of all benefices, and that those whom he placed therein were perfectly right in giving to the supreme bishop a portion of that which was his own, thus justifying one of the most unpopular abuses in the church of his day. These views he repeated in several of his writings, which excited much attention, and were vehemently controverted.

Two years after the famous sermon at Paul's Cross in the city of London, in 1449, Pecock put out the work by which he is best known, entitled "The Repressor of overmuch Blaming of the Clergy," * in which he formally took upon himself the task of categorically setting out and replying to some of the principal articles of the Lollard grievances, in the matter of the doctrines and practices of the English Church. Some of these grievances were no doubt much exaggerated, and others might have been safely disregarded, such as the holding of landed possessions by the clergy, and the retention of the various ranks of the hierarchy, which the Lollard reformers alleged were not in accordance with primitive tradition. But some of the questions treated of in the "Repressor" referred to the grave errors in doctrine and in practice which had gradually crept into the theology and teaching of the mediæval Church of England, and which were for the most part swept away eventually at the time of the Reformation—notably the improper use of images, and the going on pilgrimages to notable shrines where miracles were reported to have been wrought.

The "Repressor" was a very able work, and, from the standpoint of the defenders of the system which Pecock laboured to uphold, was no doubt a masterly performance. It is looked upon, and justly, as the earliest piece of good philosophical argument which our English prose literature possesses. It is to the student of English mediæval church history especially valuable, for it clearly and unmistakably sets forth some of the doctrines and authoritative teachings of the church just before the era of the Reformation, which were most seriously controverted by the reformers; and it gives, too, in the case of the particular doctrines and practices dwelt on by Pecock, the best argument which could be alleged in their defence by a learned and trained theologian. Especially valuable is his defence of the use and even of the adoration of images, and of the widely-spread practice of pilgrimages in the English church in the days—roughly speaking, about the middle of the fifteenth century—when he was a public teacher of authority.

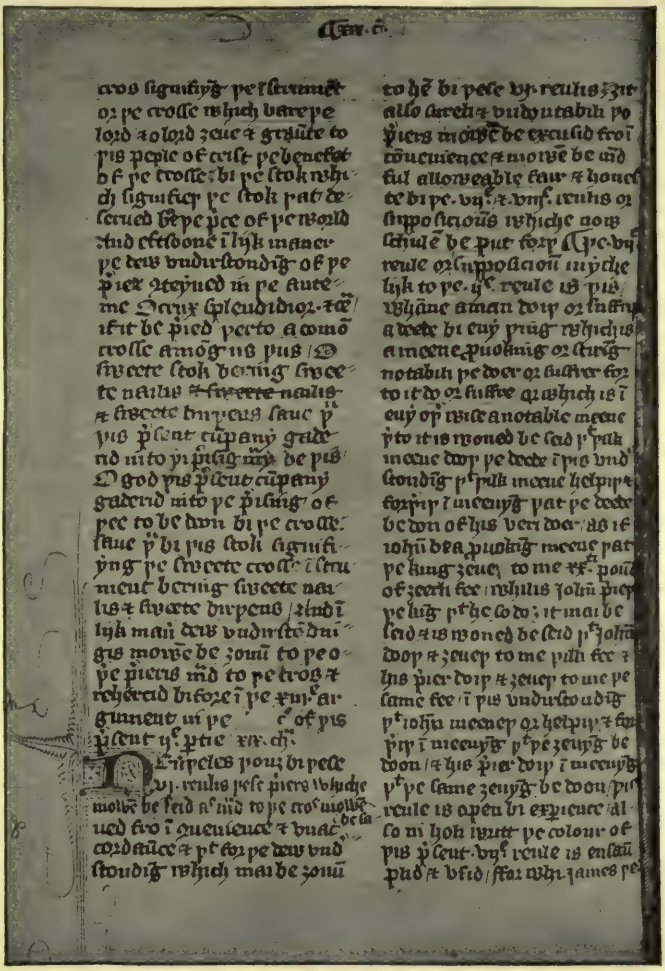
It will ever remain a curious and un-

* "The Repressor" of bishop Pecock was published in the Series of the Master of the Rolls in 2 vols.—edited by Churchill Babington, 1860. This is the edition referred to in this work.

solved problem how it came to pass that such a fearless and uncompromising apologist of the existing state of things, such a vigorous defender of the grossly abused power of the Pope, of the unspiritual occupation of the bishops, of the many unscriptural superstitions which weakened the teaching and disfigured the practice of the church, could have fallen eventually under the ban of that mediæval church of which he was only the too faithful servant. The fall of Reginald Pecock, bishop of Chichester, his condemnation, his deposition from his high office, will probably ever remain a mystery. Political reasons, the constant changes in the unhappy government of the times of Henry VI., the relentless enmity of the friars, whose errors and mistakes he lashed with unsparing severity, no doubt largely contributed to the fate of this really great though mistaken man. They are not, however, sufficient in themselves to account for the ruin and disgrace with which the career of bishop Pecock was closed.

A curious testimony to some of the ritual and teaching of the church of his day is given in his "Repressor." The Lollard reformers seem to have taken special exception, and justly, to the teaching of the church on the question of the efficacy of prayers offered not only to saints, but to images of saints, and especially to crucifixes. Bishop Pecock pleads that these images and crucifixes are useful for the devotions of the people as "rememorative or reminding signs," and argues for their use in divine worship from the Old Testament history of the cherubim of the tabernacle, and the symbols of the temple of Solomon. In the course of his arguments, however, he lets in a flood of light upon the general and prevalent use in the last days of the mediæval Church of England of these strange novelties, telling his readers that it was "full reasonable" and "full worthy" that where the body or bones or any relic of a saint might be had, that such a relic be set up in a public place to which the people might have access; and then he went on to say that since we possessed neither bones nor body of Christ crucified, or of His mother Mary, it were well that images of these should be made and set up. Yet the eminent teacher contradicts himself a little further on, when he quotes from the hymns sung in church on the feasts of the "Invention" and "Exaltation of the Cross." The "Hymn to the Crucifix"—an anthem sung on the Feast of the Invention of the Cross, May 3—showed that the crucifix evidently had a deeper signification than merely as a reminding sign. The hymn in question ran thus:—"O crux splendidior cunctis astris . . . dulce lignum, dulces clavos, dulcia ferens pondera! salva præsentem catervam in tuis hodie laudibus congregatam"—the latter clauses of which Pecock translates: "O sweete stok, bering sweete nailis and sweete birthens, save thou this present cumpanie, gaderid togidere now this dai into thi preisingis" (thy praises). And that there should be no mistake as to his estimation of images and crucifixes, he argues on the perfect reasonableness of believing that some of them were wonder-working. God, he urged, had made special choice of certain images and crucifixes by which He was pleased to work miracles, alluding to such marvels as sweating

images—of images that moved or that turned their eyes, or even spoke—explaining these marvels thus: "that specke saints, so bitterly inveighed against by the Lollard reformers, Pecock warmly defends, and pleads as Scriptural authority for



PAGE FROM BISHOP PECOCK'S "REPRESSOR" (15TH CENTURY), CONTAINING THE WORDS "O SWEETE STOK," ETC. (*Cambridge University Library.*)

and soun (sound) be mad in the ymage bi an aungel of God, as it was doon in the asse of Balaam."

Pilgrimage to notable shrines, to wonder-working images and crucifixes, images of Christ crucified, and of Mary and of other these religious exercises on the part of the people, so highly approved and recommended by the church in which he was an eminent teacher, the example of the holy devout women, "which wenten in pilgrimage to Cristis sepulchre, and to his deed

bodi, for to be the more remembrid of him." Christ, he adds, prophesied that Mary Magdalen should do so, and he approved and justified her deed. That the church in the days of Henry VI. believed in the special sacredness of certain shrines and in certain miraculous powers resident therein, and in its popular teaching encouraged the people to visit these holy places as pilgrims, is emphasised by bishop Pecock in his "Repressor."

One of the arguments pressed by the Lollard reformers against the blind superstition of these pilgrimages, which had become so prominent a feature in the religious life of England, was that God is present everywhere alike, and that no place or image is holier than another, and that therefore pilgrimages to Walsingham and other famous shrines were idle and vain. Pecock in the name of the church stoutly combats such an assertion, maintaining that God chooses one place rather than another in which to work miracles, and this divine choice makes one place holier than another, and by like reasoning one image holier than another, and consequently that a pilgrimage to such a place or image would be especially profitable and helpful to the devout pilgrim. In support of this assertion he refers to the Old Testament, how God chose Jacob's resting-place at Bethel, quoting the well-known words of the ancestor of the twelve tribes—"Sotheli the Lord is in this place, and y knewe not! . . . Hou gastful is this place! Here is noon other thing no but the hous of God, and the gate of heuen!" Again he cites the instance of the burning bush in Horeb, quoting the words of the angel to Moses—"undo the scho of thi feet, for the place in which thou stondist is holi lond."

Besides the grave doctrinal errors which gradually had crept into the Church of England, obscuring the light and weakening the influence of the cardinal truths of Christianity; besides the lack of earnest spiritual rulers and markedly able men in the hierarchy during the first three quarters of the fifteenth century; besides the lamentable superstitions which were disfiguring the church's life and practice, and notably this undisguised reverence, passing too often into adoration, of image and crucifix, to which frequently supernatural powers were strangely attributed, and the tendency to imagine, perhaps to invent miracles to support the pretended claims to sanctity of certain shrines chosen as fitting objects for popular pilgrimages; besides all these grave defects in the doctrine, teaching, and practice of religion, over the whole Church of England, penetrating into and thereby affecting all its work, private as well as public, brooded the dark shadow of the Roman supremacy.

This claim to universal supremacy had gradually grown as the age advanced. For four hundred years since the epoch of the Norman Conquest, when its spiritual claims were first virtually admitted, Rome had been ruling over the Church of England. When an evil or weak monarch, such as king John or king Henry III., was on the throne, the interference of the Italian bishop was not by any means confined to ecclesiastical matters, but he openly meddled even with questions connected with the civil government of the realm. When a strong ruler, such as

Henry II. or Edward I., wore the crown, such interference with state matters apart from the church was not brooked, or was only sanctioned when that interference was exercised in a direction which pleased the sovereign and contributed to help forward his plans and wishes. Rome's power to enforce obedience to her ever-growing, haughty claims, even in spiritual matters, received a sudden check, as we have seen, during the long-protracted absence of the Popes from Italy and their residence at Avignon, and then during the fatal schism in the Papacy which immediately followed the years of the Avignon exile. It is true that the exiled bishops of Rome during that long period still maintained the same haughty attitude, and claimed the same obedience, but the assumption of authority was uttered in a feeble voice. That voice was not unfrequently disregarded when it came from Avignon on the Rhone, instead of from Rome on the Tiber.

The middle of the fifteenth century, however, witnessed a renaissance of the papal power. The period of exile from Italy and Rome was over at last; the deadly schism was at length healed; and once more a Pope, without a rival or competitor in the sacred office, issued his bulls and mandates from the city whose grandeur and splendid traditions had contributed so largely to the gradual growth of the power and assumptions of its bishop. The time, indeed, seemed ripe for Rome, with its newly recovered spiritual authority, to assert and make good the claims put forward by a Hildebrand or an Innocent III. to rule over the English church. In England, too, much seemed at this juncture to favour her pretensions. The government of the country was weak and divided; the hierarchy of the church possessed no really eminent spiritual advisers, its leading bishops being mostly statesmen of no specially marked ability rather than theologians; the church's teaching was becoming more and more honeycombed with grave doctrinal errors and baseless superstitions, and was every year losing more and more of its hold upon the hearts of the people. Such a prelate as Martin V., when, after the long exile and schism, he found himself once more restored to Italy and Rome, and seated firmly on the awful throne of the great Popes, would not be likely to abate the pretensions of his predecessors to supreme rule in the Catholic church; and in no country in western Christendom had these pretensions been recognised and exercised as in England. Let us briefly review what these Roman claims in the Church of England were; claims, too, so generally acknowledged, that nothing but a mighty revolution like the Reformation of the sixteenth century could have effectively put an end to them.

We may dismiss with a word or two Rome's claim to exercise a civil supremacy. It is true we read of such in the days of William the Conqueror, of his son William Rufus, and in the reign of the Angevin monarch Henry II., the Plantagenet; but these powerful sovereigns utterly rejected them. John Lackland's surrender and subsequent homage, and the weak acquiescence of his son Henry III., gave some colour to these pretensions, which were, however, finally and decisively repudiated by kings like Edward I. and Edward III.; and the formal and decisive repudiation

of the kings was sanctioned by their Parliaments.

But the claim of Rome to general spiritual supremacy over the Church of England was a very different thing, and was never successfully repudiated until the Reformation rudely broke off all relations between them. Before the Norman Conquest, in the eleventh century, this claim of the Popes to supremacy over the Church of England was shadowy and unreal, and was mainly confined to the bestowal on the metropolitan of the sacred symbol, the pall—a simple collar, which we have already described, of white wool with pendant stripes before and behind, embroidered with four white crosses. It was first bestowed on the newly-appointed metropolitan as a compliment ; by-and-by it began to be accepted as the vehicle by which metropolitan power was conveyed. With this gift of the pall, however—at most a shadowy and ill-defined privilege—the connection between the Pope and the Anglo-Saxon church began and ended. No direct or unsolicited interference of Rome with the affairs of the church before the time of the Conqueror, is recorded.

But with the Norman Conquest a new relation was at once established between Rome and England. The enormous assistance given by the bishop of Rome to the pretensions of the Norman William to the English crown, and gratefully accepted by the Norman duke, placed the Roman bishop in quite a different position as regards the church of the conquered land. Gregory VII. (Hildebrand), who then occupied the chair of St. Peter, was not slow to avail himself of these new and changed relations. Within four years of the battle of Hastings we note the presence of legates from Rome in England, assisting the Conqueror to remove Anglo-Saxon bishops from their sees. It was in vain that the masterful Norman king, who soon had cause to dread this foreign interference, formally ruled that no Roman legate, with his great though undefined power, should be admitted into England unless he had been previously appointed legate at the request of the king and the church. The mischief was done. The presence of the papal legate had been sanctioned, and his powers formally recognised by the crown ; and from the end of the eleventh century onwards, with scarcely a year's intermission for some four centuries and a half, in one form or another, a legate, armed with vast though perhaps indefinite powers from the Pope, was ever present in England, guiding and controlling the church under the authority of his Italian master.

This custom, absolutely fatal to the independence of the church, was only discontinued when the Reformation severed all connection between the churches of Rome and England. We read of Anselm, the too faithful servant of the apostolic see, who followed Lanfranc, the first Norman archbishop, positively remonstrating with Pope Paschal II. for giving the archbishop of Vienne legatine power over England. In 1125 the presence of John of Crema, who held a legatine council at London, was viewed as an insult by archbishop William of Corbeuil, the English primate ; and deeming the intrusion of a foreigner armed with these powers a matter of such grave importance for the future of the English church, the

archbishop of Canterbury undertook the long and difficult journey to Rome, on purpose to discuss the question with the Pope. The result of his visit was the

A PAPAL LEGATE'S COURT.

commission of himself (the English archbishop) as legate, with jurisdiction over the whole island.

The precedent here established was of immense importance, and had a momentous influence upon the spiritual relations of Rome and England for several centuries. For while removing the ever-recurring presence of a foreign prelate in England, exercising vast and ever undefined powers over its national church, which would have been a constant affront and mortification to the national pride; by placing the legatine authority in the hands of the archbishop of Canterbury, it forced the sovereign and the church

to admit the supreme jurisdiction of the Pope, thus vested in the chief prelate of the English church, who was also, from his official position, one of the chief counsellors of the crown. From henceforth every important act done by the archbishop of Canterbury had the appearance, at all events, of being sanctioned by the authority of Rome. With the exception of a very few short intervals, when some other very influential English prelate took the place of the archbishop as papal legate, from the days of archbishop William de Corbeuil, in the first quarter of the twelfth century, until the Reformation, the archbishops of Canterbury were legates of the Roman see.*

The oath taken by cardinal John Kemp, archbishop of York, to the Pope when he was translated from York to Canterbury, in 1452, will give some conception of the relations of the English primate to the Pope in the middle of the fifteenth century. Six bulls were then issued from Rome with mandates to different persons and corporations, including the chapter appointing the cardinal-archbishop of York to the vacant primacy. The oath of cardinal Kemp ran as follows:—"I, John, archbishop of Canterbury, from this hour forward shall be faithful and obedient to St. Peter and the holy church of Rome, and to my lord the Pope and his successors. . . . Their counsel to me credited by them, their messengers or letters, I shall not willingly discover to any person. The Papacy of Rome, the rules of the holy fathers, and the regality of St. Peter, I shall help and maintain and defend against all men. . . . The rights, honours, privileges, and authorities of the Church of Rome, and of the Pope and of his successors, I shall cause to be conserved, defended, augmented, and promoted. I shall not be in council, treaty, or any act in which anything shall be imagined against him or the Church of Rome, their rights, seats, honours, or powers. And if I know any such to be moved or compassed, I shall resist it to my power, and, soon as I can, I shall advertise him or such as may give him knowledge. The rules of the holy fathers, the decrees, ordinances, sentences, dispositions, reservations, provisions, and commandments apostolic, to my power I shall keep and cause to be kept of others. Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to my holy Father and his successors I shall resist and prosecute to my power. I shall come to the synod when I am called, except I be letted by a canonical impediment. The thresholds of the apostles I shall visit yearly personally or by deputy. I shall not alienate or sell my possessions without the Pope's counsel."*

This oath was formally taken by the principal subject of the realm, after the various great anti-papal acts of Provisors and Præmunire had been enacted and re-enacted, and formally placed among the statutes of the realm. There is no doubt that these acts were again and again evaded.

Occasionally special legates, besides the perpetual resident legate, were sent to England from Rome, as in the case of

* See Bishop Stubbs: "Constitutional History of England," chaps. viii., xix.

* Quoted in Dean Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury," vol. v., chap. xx., Archbishop Kemp.

Gualo and Pandulph in the reign of John, and Otho and Othobon and Guy Foulquois in the thirteenth century; but these extraordinary missions were only of rare occurrence. As a rule, for four hundred years the archbishop of Canterbury represented the Pope of Rome in England as his legate. The full significance of this enormous concession on the part of the mediæval Church of England to the Italian bishop is often lost sight of. A good instance of the position which an imperious Pope deemed his English legate, the archbishop of Canterbury, to hold towards himself, occurs in the directions given by Pope Martin V., as late as in the fifteenth century, to archbishop Chichele. He insisted that Chichele, his legate, should procure the repeal of the anti-papal statute of Provisors, the effect of which was so justly dreaded at Rome. When Chichele declined to comply with his imperious master's will, alleging that he possessed no power which would enable him to carry out such instructions, Pope Martin V. suspended him from his legatine office.

In the case of the appointment of the English bishops, all through the Middle Ages the influence of Rome was very great, though varying with the character of the monarch who was at the moment of the vacancy occupying the throne. In the case of the numerous disputed elections to the episcopate, and disputes between the clergy, the chapters of the cathedrals, and the crown, which each claimed an elective voice, the decision was usually referred to Rome. The knowledge that Rome possessed the power to decide such a vexed question, and virtually to settle the appointment, no doubt enormously multiplied such disputes. These disputed elections were by no means confined to the suffragan bishops of Canterbury, but in several cases affected the metropolitan see itself, and several archbishops were appointed in consequence by the Roman see. To give a notable example of the boundless influence exercised in a weak reign by Rome in the appointment of bishops, in the thirteenth century, between 1215 and 1264, thirty disputed episcopal elections were referred to the Pope for settlement. Even under the strong rule of Edward I. as many as twelve cases of this kind were decided at Rome.

As time went on, the arbitrary assumption of various other powers over the English Church on the part of Rome enormously increased. In the thirteenth century the Pope began to claim rights in the bestowal even of the lower patronage of the church. As early as 1226 the special legate, Otho, demanded that two prebends in each cathedral church should be set aside for the use of the Pope. These demands were rapidly multiplied, and we have already noticed how in 1240 the bishops of Lincoln and Salisbury were positively directed to provide livings in England for no less than three hundred foreign ecclesiastics! This terrible tyranny grew in time absolutely insupportable; the Pope's claim to the right of reservation of patronage affected the tenure of every benefice in the country, and the outcry against such a shameful abuse of power at last found expression in that famous series of anti-papal Acts of Parliament quoted before, passed between 1351 and 1390, and generally referred to as the Acts of Provisors and Præmunire.

Another and oppressive instrument of well-nigh measureless influence possessed by Rome, was the widely-spread system of appeals to the papal courts. These appeals in their wide range were, although perhaps principally, by no means confined exclusively to causes and questions connected with ecclesiastical persons. As late as the second half of the fifteenth century, in a letter dated 1473, in the interesting correspondence of the Paston family, we find an instance of one of these appeals to Rome on the part of the laity, and a singular comment added by the writer alluding to the frequency of such appeals.* To us, living under an elaborate and ever-improving system of English law, administered by English judges of various degrees, such a procedure is incredible, and seems to belong to a country semi-barbarous like Hindostan, whence appeals, though by no means frequent, and only in grave and important cases, are made to the supreme courts in England; but the relation in which Hindostan stands to England affords no parallel to those existing between mediæval England and mediæval Rome.

These appeals, save in the very early days of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, when Wilfrid of York appealed to the bishop of Rome against the judgments of the king and Witan of Northumbria, were absolutely unheard of until after the Norman Conquest. The Conqueror himself, before he became master of England, had set the evil example, and had referred the vexed question connected with his marriage with Matilda of Flanders to Rome for decision. From the days of the Conqueror onward the custom of appeal to the Pope, at first only when important matters were at issue, grew more and more frequent. The statutes of "Præmunire," which forbade the prosecution of suits cognisable by the laws of England in foreign courts, although often evaded, largely diminished the number and importance of cases referred to Rome, till in the course of the fifteenth century, while papal jurisdiction in great matters was seldom heard of, in minor matters, such as the case in the Paston correspondence, it continued to be a practice of every-day occurrence.*

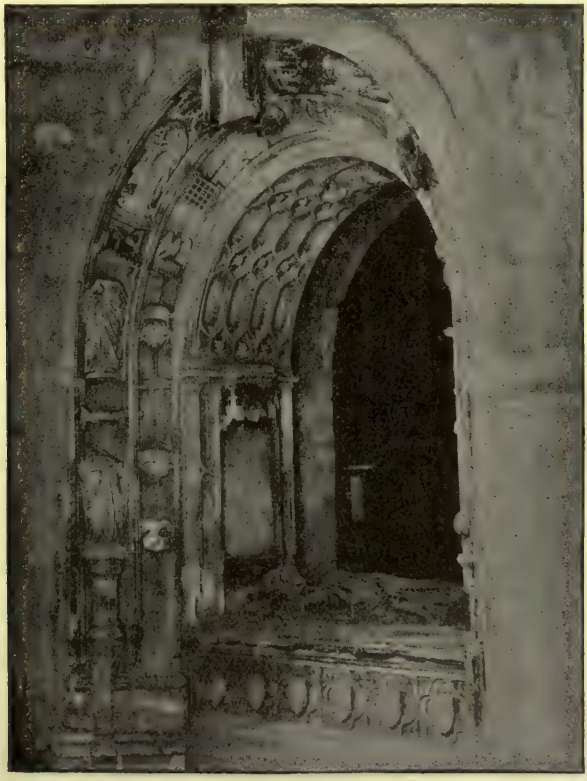
On the whole, how ill the anti-papal statutes of Provisors and Præmunire were kept is notorious. In our sketch of bishop Pecock of Chichester's life and famous writings we have dwelt, it will be remembered, on that eminent scholar and theologian's earnest and eloquent pleading for the righteousness of the Pope's claim to provide for whom he pleased out of the revenues and benefices of the Church of England, without regard to either the nationality or even the fitness of the person so "provided for." This was in direct opposition to the solemn statutes and laws of the realm, which had in several acts of Parliament declared such provisions absolutely illegal. It is notorious that large sums of money were drawn annually out of England for the benefit of the Pope and his court. The Roman exactions during the earlier Middle Ages have already been slightly sketched. From the nation at large, however, no claim for money was formally made after the reign of Henry III., save on one occasion in 1306. But the amount continually forwarded to

* See page 371.

* See generally Bishop Stubbs: "Constitutional History of England," chap. xix.

Rome for bulls and dispensations must have been very large. The instance already cited from the Paston letters, of the heavy fee paid for dispensation from a marriage engagement, was an example of these common and every-day exactions. Besides large sums of money in fees for dispensations, indulgences, and the like, paid by laymen to the Roman court, other contributions were collected by the Pope's agents in the form of voluntary gifts, ostensibly for such objects as defence against the Turks, or more commonly for a Crusade. These Crusading dreams were still in men's minds even in the fifteenth century. We remember how Henry V., as he was dying, spoke of his intense longing to be a Crusader; this was as late as the year 1422. Such exactions as these mainly fell on the clergy. A regular official papal collector of such moneys was appointed for England; an official who maintained great state and acted in the position of papal agent, to watch for vacancies in preferments, and to give timely information of opportunities for papal exactions.

In the last years of the century, in the reign of Henry VII., when cardinal-archbishop Morton, a man of stainless character, was chief minister of the crown, one John de Gigliis was furnished with a bull from the Pope, conferring on him powers to sell *pardons* for grave offences, such as usury, simony, and even theft.



CARDINAL MORTON'S TOMB IN THE CRYPT OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE AGE BETWEEN MEDIÆVAL AND MODERN HISTORY.

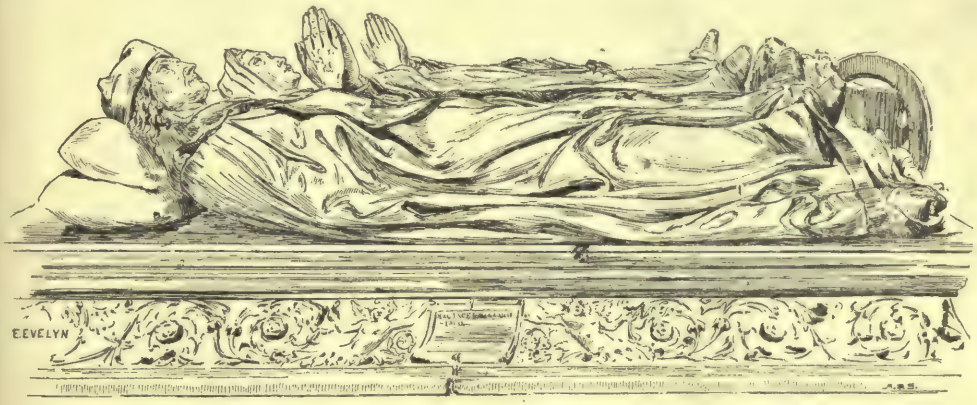
Edward IV. and Richard III.—Close of the Middle Ages at the Battle of Bosworth—Picture of this Period in the Paston Letters—Their Homely Fidelity in Character—Evidences of Roman Domination and Mediæval Superstitions—Also of true Piety and Devotion—Increase of Literary Knowledge—The Introduction of Printing, and its Momentous Results—Secular Character of the Hierarchy—Prevalence of Pluralism in the Church—Cardinal Morton.

THE long, unhappy life and reign of the ill-fated Henry VI. came to a sudden close in the Tower of London, directly after the fatal battle of Tewkesbury, in 1471, had put an end to the hopes of the Lancastrian party, and closed the Wars of the Roses. The April and May of that fatal year had witnessed two bloody battles, in each of which the Lancastrians were utterly routed; the death in the field or by the executioner's sword of Henry VI.'s gallant son, prince Edward of Wales, and most of the leaders of the party; the captivity of Henry's queen Margaret; and lastly, the sudden end of king Henry himself (men said, and probably with reason, that he had been murdered). Only a few years more have to be accounted for, and the long period known in the story of the world as the Middle Ages, is generally understood to end.

After the events which happened in 1471, Edward IV. of York reigned without a competitor. His was a disappointing career. Gifted with no ordinary gifts; tall in stature and of singular beauty; possessing withal winning manners; an able but, alas! a pitiless soldier; a statesman of no common ability and foresight, he has left behind him the most evil of reputations. His character has been severely but not unjustly summarised as that of "a man vicious far beyond any king that England had seen since the days of John, and more cruel and bloodthirsty than any king she had ever known." No great churchman, no eminent statesman appeared to break the prosperous but evil monotony of his short twelve years' reign, for Edward IV. died comparatively young. The judicial murder of his brother, the duke of Clarence, in the traditional cask of wine, was the most notorious of his many stern acts of high-handed cruelty.

The nemesis which hurried the brilliant and successful Edward IV. into a premature grave pursued his family. The story of the boy-king Edward V., who was only thirteen years old when his father died, and his young brother, is too well known to need repetition. All writers who have touched the subject unite in condemning with no unstinted condemnation the conduct of the young king's uncle Richard, duke of Gloucester, who became, on the death of his brother, Edward IV., protector of the realm. Events now succeeded each other rapidly. We read of more bloody executions of the chief advisers and

relatives of the late king ; then the setting aside by the duke of Gloucester of his nephews as illegitimate—a step which was quickly followed by their secret murder ; then the seizure of the throne by Gloucester under the title of Richard III. All these changes took place in 1483, in a few short months. Only two restless years of treason, plots, counterplots, executions, banishments, confiscation, followed. In the fatal field of Bosworth, near Leicester, mighty western Republic, wanders through that royal abbey at Westminster, and reverently gazes at the scarred and time-worn tombs where rest the dust of so many of the crowned chiefs of the great Anglo-Saxon race ; when he passes eastward, from the sacred chapel of the kings who lie in solemn state round the august shrine of the saintly Confessor, he is sensible, as he enters the gorgeous chapel of Henry VII., canopied with its fantastic traceried



TOMB OF HENRY VII. AND HIS QUEEN IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

the unprincipled but conspicuously able Richard III. lost his crown and life ; and Henry of Richmond, on a somewhat shadowy title, which he strengthened, however, by his marriage with Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV. and sister of the murdered boy-king Edward V., ascended the throne as king Henry VII. With the battle of Bosworth, the death of Richard III., and the accession of Henry VII., historians consider the mediæval period in English history to close.

When a stranger from the Greater Britain beyond the seas, or from the root, of a peculiar change. He needs no guide to tell him that he is in a building of another and later age, when he looks on the matchless monument which guards the dust of Henry Tudor. Everything is different. It is certainly not less striking, scarcely less awe-inspiring, than the grey chapel which contains those defaced—but hallowed monuments of the Confessor and his girdle of Plantagenets, which he has just been gazing at ; but there is a change, which can be *felt* rather than described. The ornaments are still Gothic, but it is a different Gothic ; more elaborate, perhaps some might say even more beautiful ;

but the tomb, the heraldic shields, the tracery of the chapel, the gorgeous roof overhead, all spring from another and a different inspiration. The stranger hears without surprise that round the vast tomb which covers the narrow sleeping-chamber of the first Tudor king, are grouped the graves, the monuments, the chapels, where rest another line of English sovereigns—

DOORWAY OF HENRY VII.'S CHAPEL, WESTMINSTER ABBEY, IN SOME OF THE PANELS OF WHICH MAY BE SEEN THE EMBLEM OF THE CROWN HANGING ON THE BUSH.

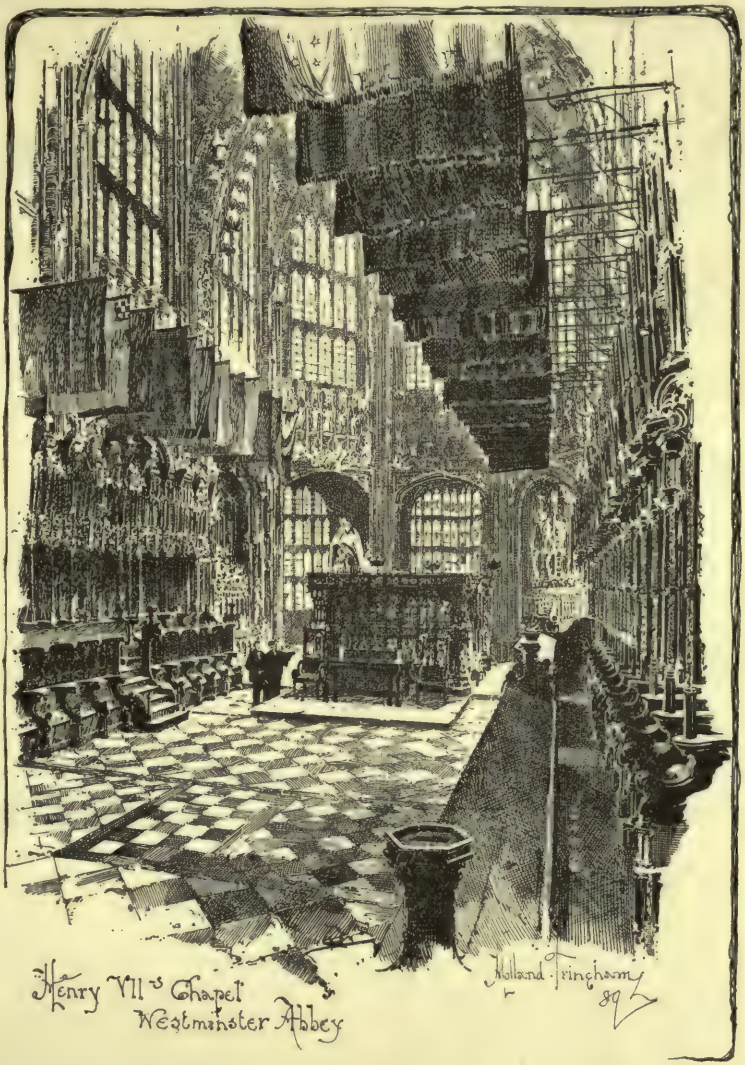
Tudors, Stuarts, Guelphs. Hard by sleeps Edward VI.; to the left lie the sister-queens, Mary Tudor and Elizabeth; to the right repose the mutilated remains of Mary, queen of Scots. The first Stuart sovereign of England has found a home in the little vault of Henry Tudor himself. Other kings and queens, who in their days have worn the crown of England, rest close beside him.

What associations crowd upon the pilgrim as he hears these historic names, and looks upon this newer group of royal graves! The graceful and stately tombs of Henry VII. and Edward VI., of Mary Tudor and Elizabeth, of the ill-fated Mary queen of Scots, suggest memories not less interesting than did the scarred and battered monuments over the coffins of Edward I. and Edward III., of Richard II. and Henry V. But while the Plantagenets are the heroes of mediæval, the Tudors and the Stuarts are the central figures of modern history.

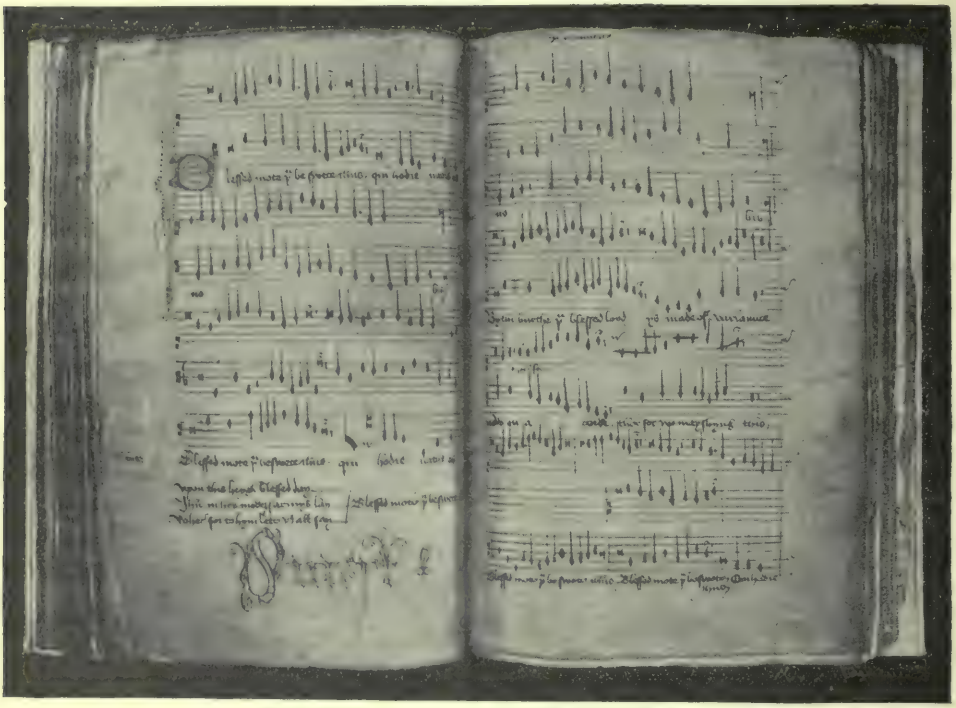
The royal English abbey is true here to the historic spirit, and marks with its own peculiar ineffaceable mark the division between the two epochs. Our definition, which takes the field of Bosworth (A.D. 1485) as marking the close of the Middle Ages, is no fancied one. Among the pictured symbols in that gorgeous jewelled glass, which lights up the Tudor chapel and its splendid tombs at the east end of the royal abbey, occurs and recurs the quaint image of a crown hanging upon a hawthorn bush, telling the old story of how the kingly coronet, falling from the helm of Richard III. when he was wounded to death, was thus caught, and thence plucked out and laid upon the brows of the conqueror in that stricken field, Henry Tudor. The stained glass in another form tells the same story as the traceried roof and the cunning ornaments of window and of wall of Henry VII.'s chapel; the same story as do the comparatively new and splendid Tudor tombs.

It was the old crown of the kings of the Anglo-Saxon race. But the circumstances of its transfer from Richard Plantagenet to

his kinsman, Henry Tudor, were strange. The throne was surrounded now with new men. New ideas took the place of the old conceptions of things. The crusading ardour which had endured for centuries, began to present itself to men's minds rather as a feverish unreal dream than as a reality which might be accomplished. The old feudal relations were disappearing, and the old and mighty baronage of England was well-nigh extinct. Few had survived the long and bloody civil wars. A new and mighty war engine had been discovered in gunpowder, which was fast changing all the old conditions of mediæval fighting. There was a wonderful progress in all



directions. From this period modern music may be dated; counterpoint was now invented, and the new advance in music received great encouragement in England. But chiefest of all, the printing press had begun its work in the homes and hearts of men—its work of spreading the knowledge of good and evil among the nations of the west; a far-reaching, all-penetrating work such as neither churchman nor statesman, scholar nor soldier, had ever dared to conceive or even to dream of, much less to provide for.

It was with this new state of society that the Church of England, in the last years of the century we have been picturing, was now confronted. It was a new and changing order of habits and customs, of practice and of thought, that the church had to deal with, and if possible to lead and to guide. We have already seen how terribly unfitted, how sadly unprepared she was, owing to various chances and mischances, to undertake with any hope of success the difficult and dangerous task. Much, very much in her teaching, in her government, in her uses and practices, required to be changed, altered, reformed, before she was fit to assume her rightful place as the guide and teacher of the new England which arose under Henry VII. and the Tudor kings.

HYMN IN LATIN AND ENGLISH, "BLESSED MOTE THOU BE, SWETE JHESUS."
(*From a Collection of Latin and English Hymns and Songs in Parts in the British Museum. Add. MSS.* 5665. *Late 15th Century.*)

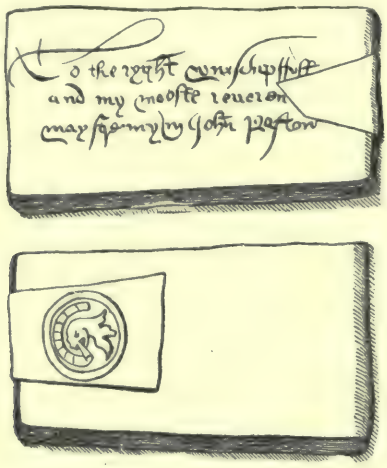
A most interesting literary discovery, and one that throws much light on the domestic history, on the *home* life of this fifteenth century, was the unearthing of the so-called "Paston Letters." Here, from chance allusions in their correspondence, we catch some glimpses of the influence of the Church of England of this period upon the life of a middle-class family of the eastern counties, and of the curious power of Rome to interfere in the most private domestic concerns. The story of these letters is briefly as follows :— The family papers of the second and last earl of Yarmouth, the head of the Pastons, were sold by that impecunious nobleman ; and, after passing through two or three hands, a large collection of letters found among these papers were published by a local Norfolk antiquary towards the end of the last century, attracting at the time great attention, as they were undeniably genuine. The letters comprised the correspondence of a respectable family occupying the position of middle-class county gentry during the reigns of Henry VI., Edward IV., Richard III., and Henry VII., a period stretching over some ninety years. More of this curious collection of letters have since been found, and we possess now four hundred of these old-world documents.*

The letters which have so strangely come to light are the family correspondence of a judge, a soldier, a country gentleman, and of a few ladies closely connected with the Pastons, with here and there a letter from a great ecclesiastic or statesman of the age. With the not inconsiderable contributions which some of the letters supply to our knowledge of the political history of the time, we have not here to occupy ourselves. Nor are we specially concerned with the strong light which this voluminous family correspondence throws upon domestic life in England, in the period preceding and succeeding the Wars of the Roses. What really interests us in these unique and precious relics of a long past age, are the scattered notices of the religious life led by a respectable middle-class household. We look curiously to see if the peculiar doctrinal errors, the correction of which was the great work of the Reformation, which followed hard upon the close of the Paston correspondence, and which we have noticed in our own narrative of the church of the time, were colouring and affecting to any marked degree the individual life of the more cultured middle class.

In passing, and as enormously enhancing the value of any such passing allusions to the Church of England, its teaching and influence, in this old family correspondence, we may dwell for a moment on the perfect "naturalness" of the bulk of the letters. They were written evidently for no eye to fall on, save that of the person to whom the letter was addressed. The wife writes her thoughts and wishes to her husband, and the husband to the wife ; the servant or the bailiff to the master ; the parent to the child. The very colour of the dresses she wants, the lady in the country describes to her husband in the great city ; while he, with equal care, dwells upon his house, his farms, his rents. Agnes Paston tells her husband about her

* "The Paston Letters" (A.D. 1422–1509), edited by James Gairdner, of the Public Record Office. 3 vols. 1896.

little various household wants, and John Paston, in return, amidst the business details, breaks in with notices of certain syrups and medicines he has found efficacious. The terrible visitations of the deadly sicknesses which, under various names, were so frequent in the Middle Ages, are not unfrequently alluded to. All the cares and troubles, the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears of an orderly

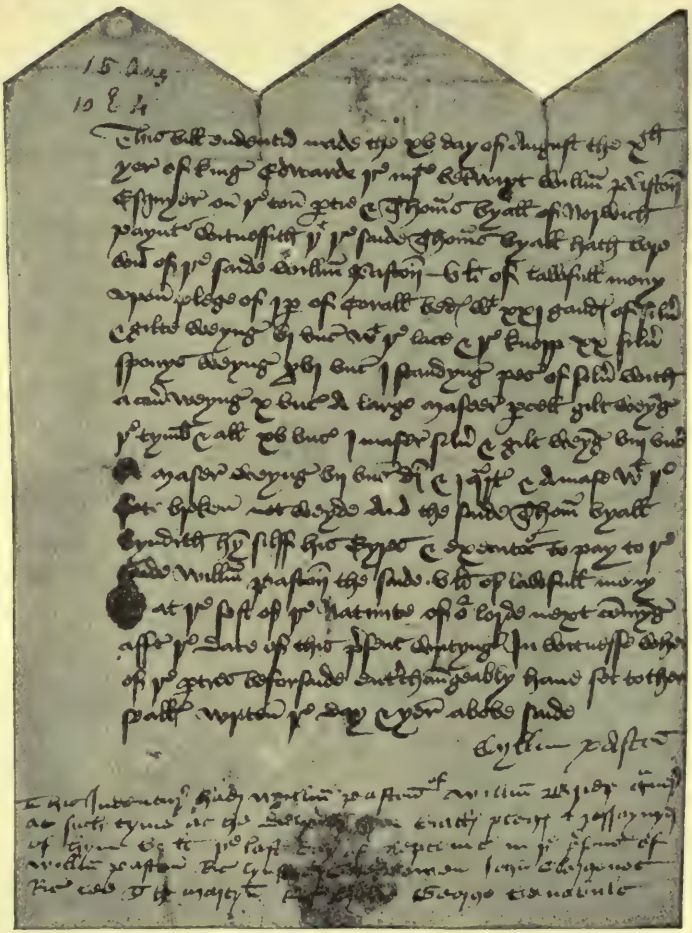


EXTERIOR OF A PASTON LETTER.

middle-class household, are just told and retold simply, naturally, unaffectedly. Horace Walpole, who was living when the first instalment of these curious letters was published, thus writes:—"The letters of Henry VI.'s reign are come out, and, *to me*, make all other letters not worth reading. I have gone through one volume, and cannot bear to be writing when I am so eager to be reading." Hannah More, on the other hand, was disappointed; the Paston letters she described as quite barbarous in style. "They might, perhaps," she thought, "be of some use to correct history; but as letters and fine reading, nothing was to be said for them." But it is just this which makes them valuable to us: their perfect simplicity and evident truthfulness. Till they were disinterred from the yellow, time-worn bundle into which they had been wrapped together, no critical eye had looked on them to correct or to improve, to select or to reject. We have them—save that the ink has faded and the paper become discoloured—just as the long-forgotten members of the Paston family first wrote them.

The family from whose remarkably preserved letters we are about to form some little picture of religious life among the middle classes in the fifteenth century, do not appear by any means to have been a specially devout or church-loving family. Commonplace ordinary believers—nothing more—were these Pastons. We read in their letters of no sublime spirit of self-sacrifice; nothing about any Crusading passion; no ardent desire after the monastic life, either on the part of the men or the women. Only in one case is any intention shown of becoming a priest; and in that solitary case the prudent mother of the would-be clergyman evidently has her doubts as to her son's fitness for the work of the ministry. "I will love him better," she wrote to her friend and adviser, the parish priest, "to be a good secular man than a bad priest." A singularly unemotional family they seem indeed to have been. Their very love affairs were evidently managed generally in a calm, business-like fashion, fitting alliances being sought after, and a fair provision for the married life being usually carefully arranged for. The love-letters,

few in number, are decidedly prosaic, and the expressions of the lovers most restrained. One thing is especially noticeable, however, throughout the long series constantly the son asks his father's or his mother's blessing; the wife ever addresses her husband as "right worshipful." In well-nigh all of them the protection of



A PASTON LETTER. (*British Museum.*)

of these curious old-world compositions: a vein of marked courtesy runs through them all. Was it the lingering remains of the old spirit of romantic chivalry, which was fast dying out in the age when these Pastons lived and wrote to each other? In the most familiar letters we notice how Almighty God, the blessing of Our Lady, or some honoured saint, is carefully invoked by the writer on the head of the person to whom the letter was addressed.

What, then, do we learn of the doctrines and practices of the Church of England, of

which these Pastons were loyal though perhaps not enthusiastic members?

Again and again the parish priest is alluded to. He was clearly an influential person in the family life of that period. Men of mark like Sir John Fastolf, the cousin of the Pastons, would write to the parson of Castlecombe as his trusty and well-beloved friend, putting into his hands the management of his household at Caister and the improvement of his lands. Margaret Paston entrusts to her parish priest the future of her son, and takes his advice in all her affairs. Great care is evidently taken to secure good and efficient men for the benefices of which the family possessed the presentation. Some curious, business-like details of one of these benefices appear as memoranda among these letters, and give us some idea of one of these family livings in the time of Edward IV. Oxnead Parsonage was within six miles of the city of Norwich. "The church"—so runs the Paston memorandum—"was but little, and is reasonably pleasant and in good repair, and the dwelling-place of the parson is adjoining, and is also in good repair, with a hall, chambers, barn, and other offices." It possessed large fruit gardens, with arable land, pasture and meadow. It stood by a fresh riverside, and was only two miles distant from the good market-town of Aylsham. The various emoluments are given, but they do not appear to have amounted to a very large sum, for a special note, written in William Paston's own hand, adds: "He that hath this benefice, if he be a poor man, might have license to perform other services"; for Oxnead, according to the memorandum, was "an easy cure to keep, for there were not more than twenty persons to be yearly houselled"—that is, to receive the sacrament.

In many of the letters is the question discussed of the generous bequest of Sir John Fastolf to the church; a bequest which provided for the establishment of a college or religious endowment, in which were to be maintained seven priests and seven poor folk, at Caister—a foundation which seems subsequently to have been transferred to Magdalen College, Oxford, with the consent of the Pope. Such acknowledgment of the supreme power of the Pope appears several times in these letters, notably in this Roman dispensation enabling Sir John Paston to apply the endowments of the intended religious house at Caister to the support of Magdalen College, Oxford.

This supreme dispensing power of Rome, however, was by no means confined to matters of public interest, such as questions of the removal of the college of priests from Caister to Oxford, but was exercised in private and delicate family matters. Sir John Paston was formally engaged to a mistress Anne Haute, a distant kinswoman of Elizabeth Wydville, queen of Edward IV. From this marriage contract, after much correspondence, Sir John Paston was released by the Pope, who formally annulled it. Some curious details respecting this delicate family negotiation are given, and they show us to what an extent Rome and Rome's agents were able to interfere in the most private matters in England, as well as in important state affairs and in business of a public interest. The question in the Roman courts of the

annulling the marriage contract evidently turned on the amount of fees which should be paid for the dispensation, rather than on any moral question of right or wrong. Sir John Paston writes to his brother thus on the matter:—"I have an answer again from Rome that there is the will of grace and salve sufficient for such a sore, and that I may be dispensed with. Nevertheless, my proctor there asketh a thousand ducats. But Master Lacy, another Roman runner here which knoweth my said proctor there, saith that he meaneth but one hundred ducats, or two hundred ducats at the most. He wrote to me also that the Pope does this nowadays very frequently."

These Paston letters and papers supply us with many and ample proofs how deeply the superstitions and doctrinal corruptions, which were dealt with so unsparingly in the Reformation, had affected all religious life in England. Margaret Paston writes to her husband in the Inner Temple in London, after he had recovered from some grave malady, telling him that his mother had vowed to give an image of wax the weight of himself to Our Lady at Walsingham, and that she (Margaret) was bound on a pilgrimage thither, and also to the shrine of St. Leonard's at Norwich. Prayer to "Our Lady," the blessed Virgin Mary, was evidently most usual in private as in public. References to it occur and recur in these letters.

Several copies of wills are among the Paston papers. Some important references to doctrines and teaching common to the church of the fifteenth century appear in these documents. In the will of Sir John Fastolf, dated 1459, are directions to his executors, John Paston and another, to distribute certain sums among poor and needy persons, "for the more hasty deliverance of my soul from the painful flames of the fire of purgatory." In the same will we find, too, a direction that "one of the priests or monks in the college to be founded at Caister should sing specially in perpetuity for the soul of my mother and all her ancestors and good doers." In the will of Agnes Paston, the wife of the judge, dated 1466, we meet with the following direction:—"A sum of money be paid daily for ever to the monk that for that day singeth the mass of the Holy Ghost in our Lady Chapel in Norwich, where he (her husband) purposed to lay his body; to sing and pray for his soul and mine, and all the souls that he and I have had any good of," etc. And, again, Agnes Paston bequeathed to the altar in the house of the White Friars at Norwich, where her husband and she had a perpetual mass, a vestment of red satin for the priest. Sir John Paston's will, dated 1477, bequeathed his soul to God, Mary, St. John the Baptist, St. Christopher and St. Barbara, and directed that a brother of the priory of Bromholm should "sing for his soul." Margaret Paston, in her will, dated 1488, likewise commended her soul to God, His blessed mother, St. Michael, St. John the Baptist, and all saints. She directed, among other things, that a taper of wax should burn upon her grave in the church of Manteby each Sunday and holy day during all divine services in that church, and daily at the mass of the priest who should "sing there for her soul." In the bills and

documents relating to the expenses of the costly funeral of John Paston (1466) occurs the following strange entry:—"To the vicar of Dallying, for bringing home of a pardon from Rome, to pray for all our friends' souls."

In spite, however, of all this strange outgrowth of mediæval superstition, which increased as time went on, and which threatened eventually to crush out all the real life and marvellous power of the church for good over men's souls, there was still in England much earnestness and real piety and devotion. In the packets of the letters written by the Paston family in the disturbed and anxious years of Henry VI. and Edward IV.—letters faded and discoloured with age—it is pleasant to see traces of the holy influence which the church, with all its errors and superstitions, still exercised over the hearts of a middle-class family like the Pastons of the eastern counties, who may be taken as an example of countless other homes of the same class, whose very names have been long forgotten; as would their names and story have been, had it not been for the fortunate accident which has kept their letters safe and unharmed for us to read and muse over after some four centuries.

To take one or two instances from the correspondence, what a picture of a quiet religious man's practice and custom is painted in Agnes Paston's letter to her "well-beloved son" John, written in 1453, telling him of the peaceful death of Sir John Henynham. "On Monday last," wrote Agnes Paston, "he went to his church and heard three masses, and came home again never more. He said to his wife he would go and say a little devotion in his garden, and then he would dine, and forthwith he fell a-fainting," and so died. Very touching is the message of the last blessing of his father, which the same Agnes Paston sent to John Paston, her well-beloved son —"that blessing" which, as she phrased it, "I prayed your father to give you the last day that ever he spoke—the blessing of all saints under heaven." The mother wrote on: "By my counsel, dispose yourself as much as ye may, to have less to do in the world. Your father said, 'In little business lieth much rest. The world is but a thoroughfare, and full of woe, and when we depart therefrom we bear away nought but our good deeds; and no man knoweth how soon God will call him, therefore it is good for every creature to be ready. Whom God visiteth, him He loveth. . . . Our Lord have you in His blessed keeping, body and soul.' Written at Norwich, by your mother."*

Margaret Paston, writing to John Paston in 1475, asks him to speak to the bishop of Norwich about a licence which she desires may be granted her, to have the sacrament in her own private chapel, for it was far for her to go to church, and she was sickly. There seemed some difficulty in procuring this licence, for she wrote again, suggesting that application should be made for it to the bishop (the archbishop) of Canterbury.

John Paston, in 1472, writing to his brother, Sir John, describes the earl of Arran, whom he admired greatly. In his portrait of his hero he says, "He is the *devoutest*, most perfect, and truest to his lady of all the knights that ever I was

* The quaint old English of Agnes Paston is, of course, here modernised.

CAXTON SHOWING SPECIMENS OF HIS PRINTING TO KING EDWARD IV. AT THE ALMONRY AT WESTMINSTER.

(After the picture by D. Maclise, R.A., by permission of Messrs. Henry Graves & Co,. Limited, 6, Pall Mall.)

acquainted with. Would God my lady liked me as well as I do his person and most knightly condition."

Among the "Paston" correspondence was found a copy of a letter addressed to his little boy by the famous statesman the duke of Suffolk, for a time the chief minister of king Henry VI. He was cruelly and treacherously murdered at sea. How the copy of the duke's letter came among the Paston papers is not known; but it is specially interesting to us, as showing how the influence of the church and its teaching was working in the hearts of all sorts and conditions of men, not only among individuals of the middle class such as the Paston family, but among men of the most exalted rank like the all-powerful duke of Suffolk. The chance discovery of such a letter is of invaluable importance in any sketch of the religion of the age. A few extracts will show the deep unaffected piety of the writer.

"My dear and only well-beloved son, I beseech our Lord in Heaven, the Maker of all the world, to bless you, and to send you ever grace to love Him and to dread Him. I charge you and pray you . . . to know His holy laws and commandments, by the which you shall, with His great mercy, pass all the tempests and troubles of this wretched world, and that also wittingly ye do no thing for love or dread of any earthly creature that should displease Him." . . . Then the duke enjoins his boy to be a "true liegeman in heart, will, and deed to the king (Henry VI.), to whom both you and I have been so much bound to." His son must live and die in defence of his most royal person. After loyalty to the king, the father charges his little son always to love and worship his mother, to obey her wishes, and to believe in her counsel and advice. The duke then went on to urge his boy to flee the company and counsel of proud men, covetous men, and flattering men; and to draw to him the company of good and virtuous men, and such are of good conversation and of truth. Never to follow his own wisdom, but to seek the advice of such good true counsellors as he had been telling him of . . . Doing these things, with the mercy of God, he would live in much worship and in much heart's rest and ease. "Last of all," wrote the duke, "as heartily and lovingly as ever father blessed his child on earth, I leave you the blessing of our Lord and of me, which shall increase you in all virtues and good living." The beautiful letter is closed with a prayer that, after departing this wretched world, the boy and his posterity may glorify God eternally among His angels in Heaven.

> "Written of mine hand, your true and loving father,
>
> SUFFOLK.

The introduction of printing and the consequent rapid spread of literary knowledge at this juncture, requires a few words of reference before we return to our special subject. Literature during the reign of Henry VI. and the civil Wars of the Roses, for the moment seemed to languish. Chaucer had no successor; original thinkers and writers failed to appear for many years; the literature of the Middle Ages was dying out with the Middle Ages themselves. There were various writers, but none who rose above mediocrity: poet-asters, copyists of Chaucer, confused

compilers, translators of French romance, re-writers of old mediæval legends. In the same period the universities of Oxford and Cambridge declined grievously in numbers of students, and in the learning of the teachers. It is said that at Oxford only a fifth of the scholars who had attended the lectures a century before, resorted to her class-rooms. The monasteries, too, were losing gradually their reputation as seats of learning. Yet, in spite of this strange dearth of original writers and thinkers, of skilful teachers, and of scholars eager for training, there was a new and ever-growing interest among the upper and middle classes of the people in literary knowledge.

Once more we may refer to the Paston correspondence as a proof of this. An amount of literary knowledge and facility appears in this large and varied collection of letters, which a few years earlier would have been impossible. Books and libraries find a place in the letters of this middle-class undistinguished family. Henry VI., to speak of the habits of more exalted personages, had a valuable collection of books. Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, during the transient successes of the English in France which followed Agincourt, seized the Louvre library as a great prize, which he presented to the university of Oxford. Sir John Fastolf, the famous soldier of whom we hear so much in the Paston Letters, was a known book-lover. Only a very few years later than the times of Henry VI., when his rival and successor, Edward IV., was on the throne, we find many of the chief of the nobility taking a prominent part in the love growing so fast among the people for books and letters. Lord Rivers, the queen's brother, for instance, was not only a lover of but a writer of books; the cruel, relentless lord Worcester was even more distinguished in the new world of letters.

All seemed ready for the new and marvellous invention which was to work so far-reaching a revolution among men. Indeed, some attribute the invention of the

A PRINTING PRESS OF 1498.

(*From the Frontispiece to a Book printed in that Year by Iodocus Badius Ascensianus, figured in Charles Knight's "Life of Caxton."*)

simple yet wondrous art of printing to the curious increase, about the middle of the fifteenth century, of the demand for books and pamphlets, especially (though by no means confined to) writings of a religious character. "Originating at Mainz with the three famous printers, Gutenberg, Faust, and Schœffer, the new process travelled southward to Strasburg, crossed the Alps to Venice, where it lent itself to the Aldi for the spread of Greek literature in

Europe, and then floated down the Rhine to the towns of Flanders. It was probably at the press of Colard Mansion, in a little room over the porch of St. Donat's at Bruges, that Caxton learnt the art which he was the first to introduce into England." *

This celebrated man, originally a mercer, became engaged as a copyist in the service of Edward IV.'s sister, duchess Margaret of Burgundy. He learned the new art of printing at Bruges, and brought it over to England in 1476, when Edward IV. was reigning; and for fifteen years, from his press established in the Almonry at Westminster, he worked indefatigably not only as a printer but as a translator. Out of this first printing-press, between the years 1476 and 1491, issued an incredible number of volumes for that age. We read of his supplying priests with service-books and preachers with sermons, knights and nobles with "joyous and pleasant histories of chivalry." He printed all the English poetry of any consequence which was available at that time. In history he gave his readers the Chronicle of Brut and Higden's Polychronicon. Of classic or post-classical literature, too, from the first press of Caxton issued, among other works, a version of the Æneid from the French, and one or two of Cicero's writings.

Many other influences were at work to change the established order of things. The discovery of America, for instance, opened out a new world to the enterprise and industry of Europe; the composition of gunpowder changed the methods of war. But the invention of the printing-press transcended them all in importance.

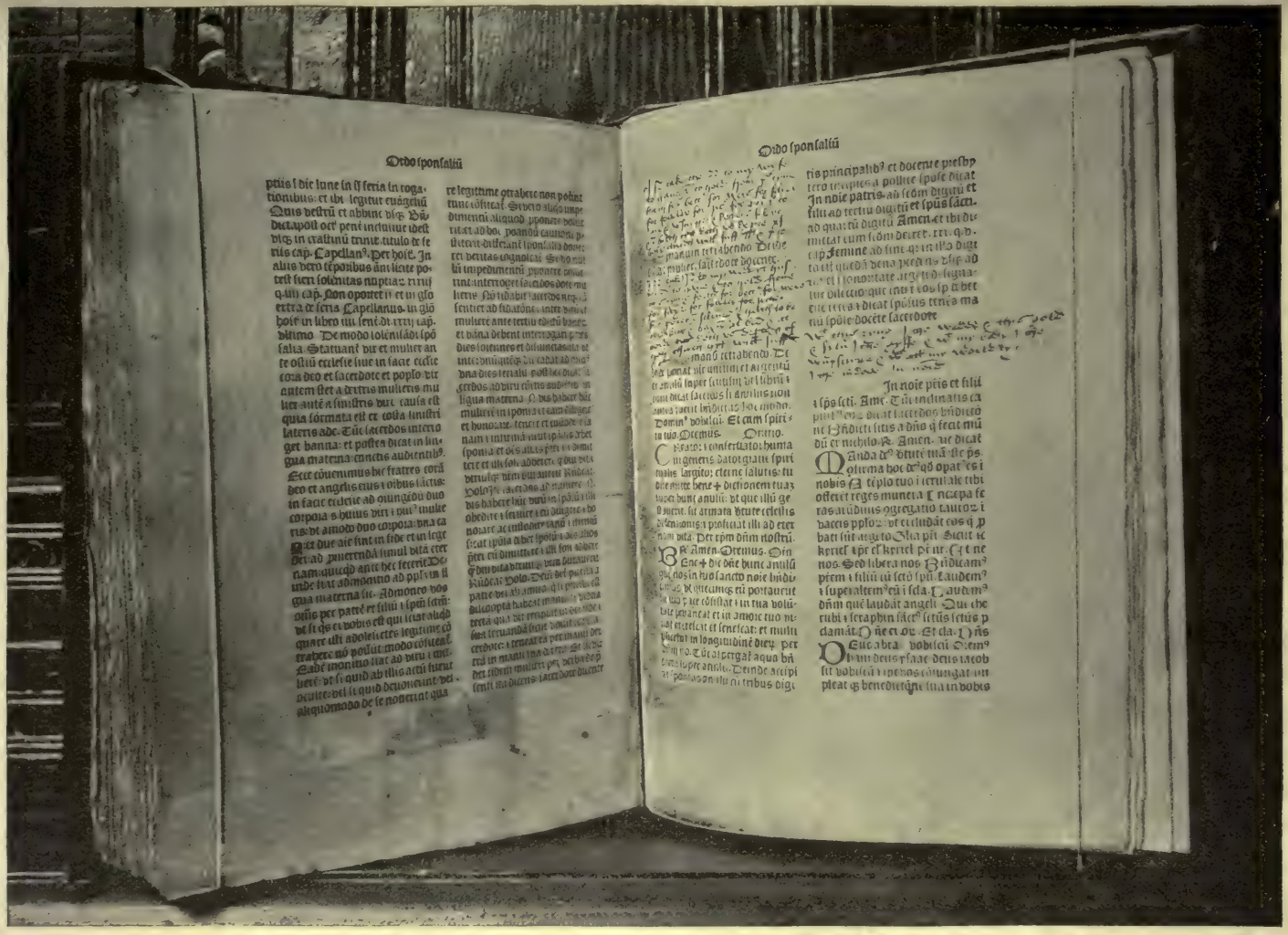
* Green: "History of the English People."

In the last thirty years of the fifteenth century a vast number of editions of books and pamphlets are said to have been published throughout Europe, the most important of them in Italy; and before the sands of the century had run out, all the Latin authors were generally accessible to students. Greek literature became common property only a little later, the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in the middle of the century driving a crowd of Greek scholars to the neighbouring havens of Italy; and the publication of the text of the New Testament in its original language precipitated, if it did not absolutely bring about, the mighty convulsion which men call the Reformation. "For the first time men opened their eyes and saw." *

One of the sources of the weakness of the Church of England at this juncture, and one that has received in popular histories less attention than it deserves, was the composition of its hierarchy, which was strangely unfit to cope with the newly-awakened spirit of the age. To resist this spirit was, of course, impossible and undesirable; but the church might have guided it, directed it, only that for this task it was utterly incompetent. A modern writer, from whom we should scarcely have expected such a terrible picture, in a powerful passage, tersely and without concealment or apology, sets this out. The words are those of a modern Romish scholar of very high authority.† He is writing of England

* M. Taine.

† Dr. Gasquet: "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries." (1889.)



Ordo sponsaliū

ptis i die lune in ij feria in rogationibus: et ibi legetur euāgeliū Quis vestrū et abinc vsq; Sūdicta postea oēs pene inchoātur vsq; in cratinū tunic. titulo de feriis cap. Capellan⁹. Per hoīe. In aliis vero ecclesiis ubi licite potest fieri solēnitas nuptiarū tunq; dū cap. Non oportet ij et vij glo extra de feria Capellanus. in glo hoīe in libro iiij sentēciarū vltimo. De modo solēnizādi hōc salua. Statuant due et mulier ante ostiū ecclesie sue in facie ecclie coram deo et sacerdote et populo virgo autem stet a dextris mulieris mulier autē a sinistris huic causa est quia formata est ex costa sinistri lateris ade. Tūc sacerdos interroget bannas: et postea dicat in lingua materna: cunctis audentibus.

Scire cōuenimus hic fratres coram deo et angelis eius et vobis sanctis: in facie ecclie ad quinq; duo corpora s huius viri i duas mulieres: et amodo duo corpora: una caro. Quę due aie sint in fide et in lege una quicūq; ante hec fecerit. Deus inde hunc abhominū ad ppōm si quia materna sit. Admonco vos oēs per patrē et filiū i spūm scīm: vt si qs ex vobis est qui sciat aliqd quare ulli adolescētes legitime cōtrahere nō possint modo cōfiteat. Sāne monitus hoc ad virū i mulierē: vt si quid ab illis actū fuerit occulte: vel si quid deliquerint: aliquomodo de se noverint qua re legitime contrahere non possint tunc cōfiteat. Si vero aliqd impedimenti aliquod proponere voluerit ab eo: postea quinetiā postulet: diffiniant i sponsalia donec veritas cognoscat. Si vero illi impedimenti proponere contrariant interroget sacerdos dicens Vultis hanc mulierem in sponsam et cam diligere et honorare: et custodire ei fidem tenere sicut vir debet: et ab omni alia muliere propter deum pactum tenere: donec deus aliter de vobis ordinet: et ecclia sancta hoc approbet. Respondeat vir. Volo. Deinde sacerdos ad mulierem. Vultis hunc virum in sponsum et cum diligere et honorare: et custodire ei fidem tenere sicut mulier debet: et ab omni alio viro propter deum pactum tenere: donec deus aliter de vobis ordinet: et ecclia sancta hoc approbet. Respondeat mulier. Volo. Deinde det pater filiam suam dicens. Ego trado tibi filiam meam. N. quam habui de uxore mea. N. defuncta. ut habeas eam in uxorem secundum legem dei et sancte matris ecclie. Et si mater adsit tradat filiam suam. Deinde sacerdos accipiat manum mulieris et det viro dicens. Accipe mulierem istam in uxorem sicut ordinavit nos deus et sancta mater ecclesia. Et det eis benedictionem dicens. Benedicat vos deus pater et filius et spūs scūs. Amē. Tūc inclinatis capitibus det eis benedictionem dicens. Benedictus sit nomen dñi nri ihū xpi q̄ fecit nos et creavit nos. Amē. Ac dicat

Ordo sponsaliū

tis principalibus et docente presbytero tempore a populo sponsi dicat In nōie patris. ad sēm dignū et filii. ad tertiū dignū et spūs scī. ad quartū dignū. Amē. et ibi dimittat cum sibi dederit. xxx. q. v. cap. Femine ad finē. quia ibi dignū est quod dona per nos dicta ad ornatū ecclie sponsalibus assignentur. et sponsalicia nō dicuntur nisi que ante ecclie fores a sponsa dicat ipsius temporis manu sponsi docente sacerdote

In nōie pris et filii et spūs scti. Amē. Tūc inclinatis capitibus det eis benedictionem dicens. Benedictus sit nomen dñi nri ihū xpi q̄ fecit nos et creavit nos. Amē. ac dicat

Mandā dñe tuis ānc oratiōes tuas hoc famulis tuis opātes i nobis tēplo tuo i cernuāt tibi offerent reges munera ⁊ nūcupa fe tas ad ubus oggregatio tantor i bacris pplor. vt cuiusdāt eor q̄ p bati sint ingresto Sha pti. Sicut ic kpist ipe et kpist pe nr. ⁊ ne nos. Sed libera nos ⁊ ēdiciam⁹ ⁊ superlatem⁹ eū i scla. ⁊ laudem⁹ dñm qui laudāt angeli. Qui che rubi ⁊ seraphin sāc⁹ sanctus sanctus p dam⁹. O ñe ei or. Et da. ⁊ as

Ecclabra dabitcī Oīem⁹ vum deus ⁊ saac deus iacob sit vobiscū ⁊ ipe nos cōiungat ut pleat q̄ benedictōne tua in nobis

PAGES FROM THE "LYME" MISSAL, CONTAINING PART OF THE MARRIAGE SERVICE.

This Missal is the earliest known impression of the Salisbury Missal, and is dated 1487. *It was printed in Paris by William Maynyal for Caxton, by whom it was published. The English responses are thought to be in Caxton's handwriting, and were probably not printed because Maynyal did not understand English. (In the possession of Lord*

during the end of the fifteenth and early years of the sixteenth centuries.

"The bishops were, with some honourable exceptions, mere court officials pensioned out of ecclesiastical revenues, holding their high offices by royal favour rather than on account of special aptitude to look after the spiritual welfare of their dioceses. They appear, perhaps not unnaturally, to have had little heart in their work. Too frequently, also, the holding of a see was regarded as a temporary position, and as an earnest of appointment to another pecuniarily or socially more advantageous. Thus, looking to obtain future favours, a bishop's energies were often directed to obtaining promised or expected preferment rather than to the management of his present district. This place-seeking kept the lords spiritual much at court, that they might gain or maintain sufficient influence to support their claims to further promotion. They looked to the king, not to the church; and regarded the temporal adjuncts of prosperity and power rather than the spiritual duties and obligations of the episcopal office. Too often, also, the bishop of an important see would be occupied in the management of the secular affairs of the state. Perhaps, even, he was paid for these services by the emoluments of his ecclesiastical office. To the king all looked for hope of reward. The church had few favours to give except at the wish and by the hands of the king. Even cardinals' hats were bestowed only on royal recommendation. The episcopal see was, moreover, not unfrequently looked upon as a property conferred for political services, and out of which the most, in a temporal point of view, was to be made. The higher spiritual and pastoral duties were often forgotten when a bishopric was sought or retained by one having no higher ideal than that of temporal advantage. Only when declining years made the struggle for position less possible, or when failure to please made absence from court advisable, did the bishop too often come to spend his remaining years in his diocese, and devote his expiring energies to his flock. The worship of wealth and influence, the struggle after power and position, in which too many churchmen joined, and the employment of energy which should have been devoted to purposes ecclesiastical, upon the secular business of state, were constantly at work at this period, sapping the very life of the church."

We may quote another similar testimony: "I declare," says cardinal Bellarmine with a preacher's exaggeration, but with a foundation of truth, "that false teaching, heresy, the falling away of so many peoples and kingdoms from the true faith—in fine, all the calamities, wars, tumults of these distressing times, take their source from no other cause than because pastors and the other priests of the Lord sought Christ, not for Christ's sake, but that they might eat His bread. The renowned glory of the clergy and sacred orders had perished; priests were despised, laughed at by the people, and lay under grave and constant infamy. And whence came all this? Was it not because the pastors did not seek above all else the glory of Christ and the salvation of His sheep, but the loaves and fishes—that is, in their ecclesiastical ministrations they regarded chiefly the income and

payments? This was the origin, this the fount of all these evils."

It is perfectly clear from the testimony and conclusions both of Romanist and Protestant writers, that apart from many grievous doctrinal errors and the growing love for superstitious practices, the church of the age which preceded the Reformation was fatally injured and depressed from the fact of so many of its leaders being statesmen rather than churchmen. All through the Middle Ages, a sure road to high preferment in the church had been through a career in which the successful practice of law, finance, or diplomacy had been the main features. Yet still, eminent and devoted spiritual leaders had rarely been wanting in the English hierarchy: a succession of men of the type of Lanfranc, Anselm, Becket, Stephen Langton, Grosseteste, and Rich, had arisen from time to time, and had guided the inner counsels of the church. But in the fifteenth century none of such saintly and eminent churchmen appeared. Chancellors, financiers, diplomatists, ministers, more or less able, of the type of cardinal Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, and Chichele, archbishop of Canterbury, appeared during the first half of the century—honourable and painstaking statesmen, but little more. In the second half, Kemp (1452–1454), Bourchier (1454–1486), Morton (1486–1500), and Dean (1500–1503) were successively primates. These prelates, who occupied the chief seat in the councils of the Church of England during that critical period when men's eyes were opening to the many corruptions and fatal errors which were disfiguring religion (1452–1503), were all statesmen; legates of the Roman see, as a matter of course, and hence bound to support the oppressive usurpations of the Pope; and the first three, who sat in the chair of Augustine for well-nigh fifty years, were cardinals as well. Among other high offices of state, the first three were chancellors of the realm, and the fourth (Dean) occupied the same high office, under the title of lord keeper. His successor, Warham, archbishop from 1503 to 1532, was also a lawyer and subsequently chancellor. This brings us far into the reign of Henry VIII.

These are merely conspicuous instances of the position and work of the church leaders at this period. The dioceses of these statesmen-bishops were too often sorely neglected, and were placed for all administrative purposes under the charge of suffragans—comparatively unknown men, often of little influence and weight; the real bishops of the sees too often forgetting that they were anything but ministers of state. It was this condition of things that bishop Pecock, in his famous work already alluded to, "The Repressor," set himself to defend. Indeed, Pecock, in his sermons and various writings, gives us an admirable and vivid picture of the state of things in the church in the last years of mediævalism. He makes no effort to explain away its errors either in doctrine, practice, or administration, but calmly and with considerable ability gives us his opinion that it was absolutely right in its teaching, practices, and ways of working; that its errors were not errors at all; and that its practice generally was in accordance with the best ecclesiastical traditions, its administration generally commendable, and positively needing no change or reform.

No doubt exists that what Pecock, bishop of Chichester, from his point of view, so ably and clearly states and so vehemently defends, was the deliberate conviction of the leading churchmen of his day. No one, alas! of any weight or position in the English hierarchy arose to point out the better way. And so the great ship of the church floundered along, seemingly, as we have said, powerful and stately and full of life and vigour, until a few years later the terrible storm arose, and then its weakness and utter inability to ride the storm became sadly manifest.

Of the group of statesmen-archbishops who ruled at Canterbury between 1452 and 1503, to whom we have been alluding, by far the most eminent, and at the same time the most earnest, was cardinal Morton, who must be considered as the minister and chief adviser of the crown in the reign of Henry VII. Henry Tudor, not a popular hero either in his own day or in the eyes of posterity, in many respects was a great king. "He found England weak and poor and divided against herself, and isolated in Europe, drenched in blood, and impotent in internal government; and he left her rich and at peace with herself, and growing in contentment and well administered, having a place in the councils of Europe second to none, and courted on every side. The king himself was, too, a virtuous man, sober, temperate, and chaste. His household was kept frugally and severely."* And by his side during the first fifteen years of his useful reign stood Morton the archbishop, an able and industrious minister of high and stainless character; and in the hands of Morton the king left almost entirely the administration of ecclesiastical affairs.

Morton, like the other minister-prelates of his type, was first of all a statesman. It is as the wise and prudent administrator, the cautious adviser, the skilful financier, that he will ever appear in the long gallery of historical portraits of the great servants of England. But this minister of Henry VII. was something more than a statesman; he loved well the church in which he filled the foremost part, and saw not a few of her shortcomings, and longed to set on foot a reformation of many of these. If only the church had been his first love! In his pastoral, for instance, put out in 1487, addressed to the bishop of London, he lashes with no tender hand some of the more glaring of the follies and faults of the clergy. For a long period, as we have seen in former letters and pastorals of the metropolitans, many of the clergy had affected the dress and had adopted the ornaments of the gentry—such as swords and daggers and gold-adorned belts; all these weapons and ornaments Morton sternly forbade. Great stress had been for some time laid upon the necessity of a degree, conferred by one of the universities, being acquired by ordained priests. The desirability of this was, no doubt, pressed in order to limit the large number of men desirous of ordination for various causes, and to secure for the church the services of educated scholars. "No presbyter," so runs the pastoral of Morton, "to whom it is not competent by reason of a degree taken in a university, was to wear any hood, furred or without fur, either doubled

* Stubbs: "Constitutional History."

with silk, or simply with a horn or short tail, or with camlet about the neck, publickly." Presbyters and clergy of the province of Canterbury were to be properly tonsured; "they were to walk out with

RICHARD FOX, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.
(From the portrait by Jan Rave.)

proper tonsures, showing the ears plainly, according to the canonical sanction." Severe penalties—such as sequestration of their benefices and suspension—were threatened, in the event of these orders and reminders not being strictly complied with.

Another evil was specially noticed in this pastoral: the constant evil of non-residence on the part of the beneficed clergy. In such cases, and they were very numerous, proper curates were to be appointed in places where dispensation for non-residence had been obtained, and the ordinaries were to see that this was carefully carried out. This system of one priest holding two or more livings was no new grievance; but, like many of the mediæval church abuses, the scandal of pluralities grew more painfully evident

as time advanced. Men like Morton felt that it was one of the serious weaknesses in church administration, and one which gravely affected church spiritual life. As early as the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century, according to archbishop Winchelsea's register, we find some famous priests holding as many as fifteen, others thirteen, while one held no fewer than twenty-three benefices. The clergymen mentioned in the archbishop's list held an average of eight livings each. In the sixteenth century, the epoch of the Reformation, this terrible abuse had increased. We find priests having as many as ten and twelve benefices, and very possibly resident in none; while there were plenty of learned men in the universities for whom no preferment could be found. In high quarters cardinal Wolsey affords a striking instance of this shameful scandal, holding, as he did, a plurality of livings, being bishop of more than one see, whilst he farmed others. This neglect of duty on the part of so many of the higher clergy had a disastrous effect all through the parochial system.

Carelessness and incompetence were too common among the parish priests of the period we are describing; indeed, Wolsey's successor in the arch-diocese of York, Dr. Edward Lee, reported that in all his vast diocese he only knew of twelve of his parochial clergy able and willing to preach to their people. In fact, when the spiritual lords and other prominent ecclesiastics took so low a view of their duties and responsibilities, it were scarcely to be expected that a high standard of life and work could prevail among the ranks of the lower and less distinguished priests of the church. To give one conspicuous example of an episcopal conscience: Richard Fox holds an honourable and distinguished position among the prelates of the last years of the century we have been speaking of; and this Fox was consecrated bishop of Exeter in A.D. 1487, translated to Bath and Wells in 1491, and then to Durham in 1494, and yet is said never to have seen his cathedral at Exeter, or ever to have set foot in his diocese of Bath and Wells.* He also obtained the abbey of St. Albans *in commendam.*

Curious special provisions were even made to legalise this unhappy abuse. Every spiritual man of the king's council was allowed to keep three livings; every chaplain of the queen or of the royal family two each. Archbishops and dukes might keep six chaplains; each marquis and earl five; and every chaplain was allowed to hold two benefices. Every doctor of divinity had the same privilege, livings in the church being regarded as legitimate sources of income. No wonder that a man of the high character of cardinal Morton, who had stern views of duty and responsibility, adverted in his "pastoral," addressed to the bishop of London, to the grave harm likely to result to the unfortunate parish—and these parishes were, alas! numerous—whose pastor was one of these non-residents; no wonder that he insisted upon an investigation into the character and powers of the curate placed in charge of such a deserted cure of souls.

In curious and unexpected ways this evil system of pluralities and non-residence developed itself; for instance, in the sixteenth

*Compare Dr. Gasquet: "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries."

century we find a young man, a possessor of high interest—Reginald Pole, the future cardinal-archbishop—when only seventeen years old, receiving a prebendal stall, and even a second two years later, both in the Salisbury diocese. At eighteen this young favoured ecclesiastic was nominated to the deanery of Wimborne minster.

In the case of the monasteries, which claimed a certain exemption from episcopal control, archbishop Morton applied for permission from the Pope, as his legate, to visit these houses. In certain of the religious communities much laxity and carelessness were said to prevail, though probably this complaint has been greatly exaggerated. Pope Innocent VII., in his bull granting the permission to visit, dated 1489, speaks of the "religious in the province of Canterbury as having gradually relaxed their rule of living—growing weary of pleasant meditation." Armed with this papal authority, the primate visited the dioceses of Rochester, Worcester, and Salisbury twice, and the dioceses of Lichfield and Coventry, Bath and Wells, Winchester, Lincoln, and Exeter once. In the visitation of 1491 he was attended by commissioners appointed by the king, at the head of whom was Richard Fox, bishop of Exeter, who was one of the most energetic of the statesmen-prelates of the reign. This Fox was an ardent educationist, and established grammar schools at Taunton and Grantham; and to him the noble foundation of Corpus Christi College at Oxford owes its existence. He even wished to found a new monastery, but was persuaded to turn his attention exclusively to the promotion of education. The words of his friend and adviser, bishop Oldham, on this occasion are memorable, and, indeed, prophetic: "What, my lord, shall we build houses and provide livelihoods for housing monks whose end and fate we may live to see? No, no; it is more meet that we should have care to provide for the increase of learning, and for such as shall do good to the church and commonwealth."

In his early life Sir Thomas More, whom we shall find in the next century the chancellor and minister of king Henry VIII., and ranking among the noblest and purest of the statesmen of that strange age, was among the intimate associates of Morton. From More we learn how devoted a friend was the eminent minister of Henry VII. to young men, and how the archbishop's household was a home and a school to not a few who received there their training for subsequent work in the church and state. Sir Thomas More in after life never forgot the kindness and friendship which the primate had shown him when young; and he loved to refer to conversations he had listened to in his palace, and has left us his estimate of his character. Morton, he says, was full of energy, and of polished manners—a man of great grasp of mind, and blessed with a prodigious memory; and king Henry VII. depended much upon his judgment. He was ever serious and grave in his deportment, but nevertheless easy of access. More's testimony to Morton, indeed, must never be forgotten in our estimate of the archbishop's character, which estimate will be an important factor in some of our conclusions. "He was a man," wrote More, "not more to be venerated for his high rank than for his wisdom and virtue."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ENGLISH MONASTICISM AT THE CLOSE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

Numbers of the Monastic Orders at this Period—Their Income—Recapitulation of their History—Evident Decline in Popularity even before the Reformation—Its Causes—Past Services of the Orders as Teachers of Organisation—of Agriculture—of Arts and Sciences—Life of a Monastery—The "Rites of Durham"—Glimpses of Art Treasures—The Monk's a Social Life—Organisation and Officers of a Monastery—Its Daily Life—Order of the Services—Austerity and Hardship—Recreation—Defects in Sanitary Regimen—Inherent Selfishness of the Monastic Ideal.

IN our sketch of the state of the church at the accession and during the earlier years of the Tudor dynasty, we have left to the last the picture of the monk and the friar—of the men who for so many centuries had played an all-important part in the church's work. A somewhat melancholy interest attaches to this division of our picture, for in the storm of the English Reformation the familiar and once well-loved figures of monk and friar disappeared for ever from the Church of England. Her doctrinal teaching, with its graver errors, was revised and remodelled after an older and a purer standard. Her archbishops and bishops ceased to be statesmen, and generally gave their life-work to things spiritual, to teaching and watching over the flocks of which they were the chief pastors. The fatal evils of non-residence and of pluralities, where benefices were regarded rather in the light of wages than as solemn cures of souls, were corrected. The baleful shadow of the Roman domination, which for so long had brooded alike over the lordly cathedral and the stately abbey, as over the humbler village church, was swept away, and the old church of Aidan, Cuthbert, and Alfred, purified and restored, resumed its sway over the souls of men. But in the reformed and nobler church, although largely remodelled after the ancient pattern, there was no place found for the monks and friars. These disappeared altogether, and the thoughtful student of the past, while acquiescing in this disappearance, and recognising that the work of the monastic orders was done, still sorrows over the unjust and even cruel treatment meted out to many a man holy and humble of heart, who was living and working according to the traditions in which he had been trained, though after a pattern which, in the new and changed condition of things, had lost its ancient signification.

At the period of the dissolution (1538–1540) the strength of the army of monks, friars, and nuns in England is computed at 8,081, besides probably more than ten times that number of people who were their dependents, and who obtained subsistence in their service. In considering these numbers, again we remind the reader that some idea must be kept in mind of the population of England at that time. The number of this population has been variously estimated by different experts. It certainly did not exceed altogether four millions; it was probably considerably less.

HUNTING PARTY REFRESHING: SCENE AT THE GATE OF A MONASTERY.

(From the picture by J. R. Herbert, R.A., by permission of W. V. Herbert, Esq.)

At all events, assuming the largest computation possible, the whole population did not amount to the numbers of the present inhabitants of London. The 8,000 to 9,000, including monks, canons, friars, and nuns, were thus divided :—1,800 were friars ; the Austin and Præmonstratensian canons numbered 932 ; there were 1,560 nuns ; thus leaving some 3,789 monks.

These regular clergy, in all some 6,000 in round numbers—regular in contradistinction to the secular clergy, who included the parochial and other ecclesiastics not bound by monastic vows—consisted of two classes: the more ancient orders, and those which sprang up in the thirteenth century, commonly known as the mendicant orders or friars. The latter, the friars, were essentially townspeople. The scene of their work, which lay almost entirely in cities, consisted mainly in preaching, hearing confessions, and any such-like directly spiritual ministrations.

The canons—mostly Austin (black) or Præmonstratensian (white), the black Austin canons being by far the greater number, the order of Prémontré never becoming really popular in England—occupied a position somewhat midway between the monks and the secular clergy. Some of these canons, though still on the roll of their houses, were busied in parochial duties, but the bulk of them still maintained a community life like the monks themselves. The term "monks," strictly speaking, belonged only to the Benedictine order, including its important offshoots of the Cluniacs and Cistercians, and to the Carthusians. Even among those professing the rule of St. Benedict, writes Dr. Gasquet, there is a broad line of distinction. The English black monks (Benedictines) and the Benedictine offshoot from Citeaux, the Cistercians or white monks, differed in their character, work, and ways. Both were great landowners, but it may be said that the Cistercians were essentially farmers, and farmed their own lands themselves. In proportion to their income the Cistercian communities were, at least until the later years of their existence, larger than the Benedictine. But the size, importance, and wealth of the Benedictine houses gave the black monks a singular prominence in England. For instance, the important houses and abbeys of Westminster, Durham, Gloucester, Worcester, Tewkesbury, Evesham, St. Alban's, Reading, Bury St. Edmund's, Winchester—to take conspicuous examples—all belonged to the Benedictine order.*

In the early part of the sixteenth century, just before the dissolution, the total number of nuns is computed at 1,560—a small number in comparison with the six thousand monks, friars, and canons of the regular clergy. These nuns owned about one hundred and forty convents. Most of them were small houses, and the great majority of these convents, at the time of the suppression by king Henry VIII. were not possessed of a yearly income sufficient to exempt them from the operation of the act by which the "lesser" houses passed into the king's hands.

The income enjoyed by all these monks, canons, friars, and nuns, according to the "Valor Ecclesiasticus" of Henry VIII.,

* For many of these details respecting the monastic orders at the epoch of the Reformation, the writer is indebted to Dr. Gasquet. The numbers given from different causes slightly vary.

seems to have amounted roughly to about £160,000 per annum, but from this sum must be deducted the yearly income of the benefices held by the monasteries, which are included in the "Valor" of Henry VIII. —a very important item. Indeed, one very careful computation returns the income of the estates of the monasteries only at a little more than £50,000 per annum.* To estimate these amounts in modern currency, it is fairly safe if we multiply them by twelve. Some finance experts would, however, suggest a larger figure by which to multiply the original sum. All these figures, however, must be accepted with great reservation; for while, on the one hand, well-nigh every religious house was sadly in debt, and its lands were crippled with mortgages more or less heavy—a state of things brought about largely by exorbitant royal taxation—on the other hand, the amount received annually through fees and offerings is quite uncertain, and largely varied in different houses, shrines, and abbeys; but the total amount of such offerings must have been very considerable.

The number of monasteries or religious houses in which these 8,081 monks, nuns, friars, and canons dwelt, at first sight seems very large. The general numbers of these houses were in all about seven hundred and fifty; this is slightly under the number which probably existed. Eight hundred, however, would probably cover everything. Of these the greater and more important houses numbered two hundred and two, and about eighteen or twenty convents of women. The lesser houses, roughly three hundred, with one hundred and twenty convents of nuns, and some two hundred friaries. Outside the two hundred and twenty greater houses, monasteries and convents, the communities were very small and very poorly endowed.

Most of them were of Norman foundation. Far back in our eventful story, at the end of the seventh and during the eighth and ninth centuries, the monastic system occupied a great place in the Christianity of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers. This, the golden age of English monasticism, came to an end when the Danish Vikings swept the land with fire and sword from the Forth and Humber to the Thames. Few, if any, of the early Saxon world-famed monasteries, survived the awful shock of the Danish triumph. Alfred and the kings of his great house, and their ministers, usually if not always ecclesiastics, endeavoured, as part of their church policy, to rebuild, to re-endow, to wake up again the perished spirit of monasticism, but only with partial success. We hear again of monasteries and nunneries in the England of Alfred and Edward, of Edgar and Canute, and they come before us even more prominently at the close of the Anglo-Saxon period, when the Confessor wore the crown. Still, it is clear that monasticism never flourished in the second period of Anglo-Saxon history, as it did before Ivar and Hubbo and their savage Vikings destroyed the ancient monasteries which the early North-folk loved so well. It is said that three hundred monasteries of various degrees of importance existed in the day when the Norman William the Conqueror slew Harold the Saxon on the

* Compare Canon Dixon: "History of the Church of England from A.D. 1529."

field of Hastings, but this computation is probably exaggerated.

Under the Norman kings, however, monasticism in England received a sudden and vast impulse. It is no baseless theory which sees in the countless stately religious buildings of the Normans of the generations which immediately followed the new settlement after the Conquest, churches and abbeys and monasteries of "expiation." It was under the Norman sovereigns and the early Plantagenet kings that the greater number of monasteries were built and endowed. The dry catalogue of numbers will best tell the strange story. There were founded under William the Conqueror forty-five monasteries. The pious work, of course, only began many years after Hastings, when the conquest of the wealthy island was virtually completed. Under Rufus twenty-five more were built. Under the long and comparatively quiet and prosperous reign of Henry Beauclerc, the Conqueror's younger son—when the Norman baron could quietly look round his new home and broad lands, not many years back the home and lands of the Saxon thanes he had dispossessed, and understand *what* he and his father who fought at Hastings and in a hundred other bloody battles and frays had done—no less than 150 new monasteries appeared in conquered England. But the passion of expiation had not yet run its course. Under the Conqueror's grandson, Stephen, 122 of these monastic houses appeared. During the long reign of the mighty Angevin, Henry II., 124 more were built and endowed; then the passion of expiation began to relax, for in the days of Cœur-de-Lion we only read of the foundation of forty-four; and when his brother, John Lackland, was king, of sixty-two. In the long reign of Henry III., stretching over more than half a century, some seventy-four more monasteries were added to the long list.

In the days of Henry III. the friar came among us; and for the mendicant Franciscans and Dominicans, and their less known imitators, eighty-three poor communities or friaries, with their landless and generally unendowed establishments, were added to the long roll of English religious houses. Under Edward I.'s rule the growing influence of the mendicant friars largely diverted the flow of gifts of pious individuals from the monasteries of the Benedictine or Carthusian orders, for we only read of sixteen new monasteries, but of the establishment of sixty-one new friaries.

The foundation of new monasteries now almost ceased, and even the friars were losing their first popularity, for in the reign of Edward II. the number of new religious houses fell to five monasteries and twenty friaries. Edward III.'s long reign saw but seven new monasteries and twenty-four new friaries. In Richard II.'s time only four additional monasteries and four friaries were established among us. During the reigns of Henry IV., Henry V., Henry VI., Edward IV., Edward V., Richard III., Henry VII., only eight new religious houses appeared; but during the period in which monasticism declined, some sixty colleges, hospitals, and schools were established by royal and other pious donors in England, some of them of conspicuous magnificence and richly endowed.

A glance over this dry catalogue will

show clearly, how the popularity of these monastic foundations had declined long before the hour of their destruction arrived. "From the time of Henry IV. the stream of benefaction was diverted from them; and while colleges and public schools were planted in numbers and

SCENE AT THE GATE OF A MONASTERY: TRAVELLERS SEEKING REFRESHMENT.
(*By permission, from the drawing by G. Cattermole in South Kensington Museum.*)

magnificence, the scanty sum of six or seven foundations of monks and friars in the course of one hundred and thirty years, bore witness to the change of the inclinations of the nation."*

Roughly speaking, we possess records of nearly 1,200 religious houses. Of these the "alien" priories—that is, those communities which were cells or dependencies of Continental abbeys—after a precarious existence during a prolonged period, were finally suppressed, to the number of about a hundred, by king Henry V., on the ground of their occasionally affording assistance to the French and other enemies of the realm. The dissolution of the Templars in the reign of Edward II. removed some more from the roll; these were about twenty-three in number. Others disappeared owing to various causes, such as gradual falling away of their property, and confiscation. In the sixteenth century, out of the eleven or twelve hundred religious houses and foundations, only about seven hundred

* Canon Dixon: "History of the Church of England."

really remained;* and of these but two hundred or two hundred and twenty alone were reckoned among the larger or more important foundations.

And not only had the monasteries of England for a very considerable period ceased, or practically ceased to multiply; the many houses that existed were sadly empty. It is computed that on the eve of their dissolution the numbers of "religious" of all the various orders had diminished by at least a third in the course of the last century and a half. This great falling away in numbers, it is true, has been explained as being due in large measure to the desolating sicknesses of the second half of the fourteenth century. The Black Death of 1349–1361 had carried off, it is generally believed, well-nigh half the "religious" in the country. No monastery in England could be said to have ever recovered from this calamity; and in the era of the Reformation no monastic house, large or small, possessed anything like its full complement of professed monks. This sudden removal by pestilence of so many of the best and most devoted must, as it has been already said, have broken also the continuity of the best traditions of ecclesiastical usage and teaching. Still, making every allowance for the awful ravages of the Black Death, had the monastic orders preserved the key to the people's hearts, a key they certainly possessed in the early Middle Ages; had the noble impulses which originally called one order after another into being still existed, there is little doubt but that they would in great measure have filled up their numbers again during the century and a half which had elapsed since the havoc of the plague.

The truth, however, was that these original impulses had spent themselves. Very changed were the conditions of life since the days of the golden age of monasticism; and the invention of printing may be said to have been the last and final blow to the old system. The monk no longer possessed the monopoly of knowledge, and the printing-press took away at once from the cloister much of its occupation. The education of the world was no longer in the hands of the famous "orders." Bishop Stubbs speaks of the "incurable uselessness" of the monastic orders on the eve of the Reformation; and although perhaps this expression may convey some exaggeration, it cannot be fairly denied, even by the most ardent apologists of the fading system, that very considerable truth underlies the great scholar's assertion. A reformation, or rather a complete recasting of the monasteries and their inhabitants, if they were to continue to exist, was imperatively needed; and the clear-sighted ministers of Henry VII. and his imperious son—archbishop Morton and cardinal Wolsey—plainly saw this, though they were unable, for various reasons, in their day of power to effect it.

One cause of their growing unpopularity with the people must, no doubt, be sought and found in the fact of their being especially the strongholds of papal influence. During much of the later period of the Middle Ages, the Pope at Avignon, as we have seen, was little else than a powerful French bishop, and hence the

* The *exact* number of religious houses is difficult to obtain, as the cells or offshoots of the more important foundations are sometimes added to the totals.

hereditary enemy of England. The close and intimate connection of the English monasteries with this naturally hostile spiritual power, no doubt seriously affected the relations of the monks and friars with the sovereign and people. The Benedictine and Carthusian houses, bound by a devoted and an interested loyalty to a foreign bishop, closely connected with the vast foreign network and organisation of their own orders, too often forgot or ignored their nationality. A true Benedictine or Carthusian monk, a Franciscan or Dominican friar, acknowledged no country as his own, was really loyal to no earthly king, save to the general or chief of his own great order, and to him who sat in the chair of St. Peter at Rome or, it might chance, at Avignon.

"In the later Middle Ages," writes bishop Stubbs,* "scarcely any abbot takes any conspicuous part in English politics; the registers of the abbeys are no longer records of national history, but of petty lawsuits; the monastic life separates itself more widely than ever from the growing life of the nation; the temporalities of the monasteries are offered to the king by the religious reformers as a ready source of revenue, by the confiscation of which no one can lose. When the great shock of the Reformation comes at last, the whole system falls at one blow, and vast as the ruin is at the time, it is forgotten before the generation that witnessed it has passed away."

But it was not always so; and in the awful ruin and storm of obloquy, amidst which the monasteries of England were swept away, their vast services, not only to religion, to literature, and to education, but well-nigh to everything which makes life beautiful and desirable, have been by many men, if not completely ignored, at least slurred over as a work of little moment, of merely transient importance. Yet no one who dispassionately reviews the history of the monastic orders can fail to see their great and beneficent influence upon the rough and often ruthless society in the midst of which they lived, in the days of the Norman and Plantagenet kings; or to recognise the splendid work done by the mendicant Dominicans and Franciscans among the hopeless and neglected poor of the fast growing mediæval towns.

A great scholar, no passionate admirer of monasticism, writing of a Benedictine community, thus dwells upon the pattern a well-ordered religious house afforded for the organisation of home and public life generally: "Administrative completeness such as reigned within the convent walls was not to be found elsewhere; in no other place do we find so exact a subdivision of labour, so placid a sequence of routine. Even the king's court in comparison was but slightly organised; the feudal lord, who was in some ways the nearest parallel, lived careless and profuse, and his castle was a scene of rough, ill-ordered plenty, secured by no very scrupulous means. The civic communities had as yet but little of the common life, and administered few estates. On the other hand, the strong organisation of the religious houses, the subdivision of responsibility, the custom of demanding and carefully auditing the yearly accounts of the officers, combined to make monasteries patterns after which a better order slowly came into being.

* "Constitutional History."

They had no need to take part in the fighting which absorbed and destroyed the well-being of the lay world; within their walls peace reigned, from their stately churches ever rose the sound of prayer and praise, their gates were open to the pilgrim and traveller; hospitality and brotherly kindness softened in many ways the harsh incidence of feudal custom." *

THE CHAPEL OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

In the earlier Middle Ages it was the monks who were the teachers of agriculture. To the end of their existence in England they were ever among the best and most indulgent landlords. And it is no exaggeration to speak of the monastic societies as being in a way the pioneers of modern commerce. From such documents as the charter of Edward III. for the St. Giles' fair at Winchester, we learn that many strangers from different parts of England resorted to this renowned fair, and purchased silver objects, gems, and spicery and wine from the monks' stalls. In the early years of the fourteenth century we ascertain that there were no fewer than 180 religious houses in England which supplied the Flemish and Florentine markets with wool

In art in its various departments, all through the Middle Ages the Benedictine especially, and imitating the Benedictine the less prominent orders too, were distinguished as the chief fosterers and patrons of architecture, painting, sculpture, embroidery, and music; and probably the large majority of English artists came from their ranks. The lordly abbeys, the stately churches, and the scarcely less beautiful and exquisite buildings clustering round them, which even now, scarred and defaced, are the joy and delight of all whose eyes are opened to see in them the fairest buildings the world possesses, perhaps ever will possess, were mostly built for the monks, and were probably largely designed by gifted members of their order; they were certainly commenced and completed under their immediate direction. Works exquisite in taste and elaborate with richness of detail, such as the chapel of King's at Cambridge, the matchless tower of Gloucester, a very marvel of strength crowned with beauty, the Bell Tower of Evesham, the Lady Chapel at Gloucester, scarcely completed when the great crash came, all show us that up to the end, neither the hand nor brain of the monk-artist had lost its cunning.

But all this was forgotten in the excited age which witnessed the ruin of the English monasteries; ignored by the generations which have come and gone since that memorable age. The monk too often has

* "Obedientary Rolls of St. Swithun," Winchester. Edited by Dr. Kitchin, dean of Durham.

been a byword on the lips of English men and women—a something to scoff at and to scorn. No whisper of pity for the victim, no word of condemnation for the high-handed spoiler of his goods, and the greedy, ruthless instruments of king Henry VIII.'s policy, appears among the usual teaching manuals, which for centuries have been placed in the hands of the children of our people. Yet the story is a saddening one, and men are beginning only now to be sensible that a great wrong was done, an awful act of ingratitude committed at the beginning of that Reformation which, as a whole, has done so much towards the making of the mighty England of to-day.

In spite of this humiliating confession, however, even the most ardent apologist for the monk must allow that when the sixteenth century, that great age of change and reconstruction, dawned, *the monastic orders had done their work;* that there was no place for them in the new order of things arising in England. This is

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL.

evident from the spiritless acquiescence with which the people of all ranks allowed the king and his servants to carry out the great spoliation. *Vox populi vox Dei*, runs the old saying, so true in the abstract, so fallacious in the particular. This popular voice would have been heard, loud and angry, had the country at large really cared for the objects of the royal confiscation. Angry murmurs, it is true, rose from certain classes of Englishmen and in certain districts of the island, when the length and breadth and depth of the great spoliation became manifest —murmurs which resulted in such outbreaks as the famous "Pilgrimage of Grace" and the formidable Yorkshire rising. But these murmurs and sporadic revolts were far from being the voice of England as a nation, and soon died down. The monk, the nun, the friar, had disappeared, had dropped out of the busy ranks of the English people; and only a few cared very much. It is an indisputable fact—and even those who not only mourn with a true mourning over the cruel wrong done to a crowd of God-fearing men who were many of them striving to live up to the light vouchsafed to them, but bitterly resent the still graver wrong done to the memory of most of them, cannot help acknowledging—that England as a nation, if it did not applaud, at least calmly acquiesced in the tremendous monastic confiscation.

Before we let the curtain fall on the last days of the mediæval Church of England, it may be well to devote a few paragraphs to a picture of the life led in one of those great monasteries, whose utter ruin and destruction we shall have so soon to chronicle. The picture of the life of an important religious house such as we are about to paint, is simply an example of the many. The life of a large Benedictine monastery, whether at Durham or Bury St. Edmunds, at Peterborough or at Gloucester, differed in but very few particulars.

That the life led by the dwellers in such a house was very different from the common conception—a conception, alas! fostered by the conspicuous unfairness and want of candour of some of our most popular and admired historians—we learn from the lips of the great spoiler himself, king Henry VIII., who, in the preamble to the famous Act of 1536, which runs in his august name, speaks of "divers great and solemn monasteries of this realm (of England), wherein, thanks be to God, religion is right well kept and observed." This formal state acknowledgment availed the objects of the acknowledgment nothing; and the king in whose name it was made, within four or five years of its publication, swept all these monasteries, "where religion was right well kept and observed," into the common net of confiscation. It is the picture of one of these "great and solemn monasteries" we are about to paint, and the colours we shall use are no fancy ones, but simply reproduced from a picture—a very quiet, truthful one—painted by one who had seen the interior of such a house.

The "Rites of Durham," published by the Surtees Society in 1842, from a MS. written in 1620 from an original bearing the date of A.D. 1593, is a document which stands alone as a connected account of life

in a great monastic community at the very moment of its destruction. It is certainly the work originally of a man who had personal experience, and had actually seen what he describes. It is no animated story, no apologia for a vanished life; it is a quiet prosaic description, partaking, indeed, rather of the character of a guide-book or of the catalogue of a museum, than of an apology, or a defence, or a piece of accusation.

The famous Benedictine house of Durham is the subject of the little memoir. Now in Durham we possess the great advantage of being able to verify much of the writer's description. Had our picture been drawn of Bury St. Edmunds or of Whitby, or of Reading or of Evesham for instance, a ruined wall, the remains of a traceried window or solitary tower, would have been all the *matériel* at our disposal when we sought to check the accuracy of the writer. But in a few rare instances, such as at Durham in the north, and at Worcester in the southern midlands, and at Gloucester in the south-west, the spoiler happily did not complete his work of ruin. Scarred and disfigured, sorely mutilated and plundered of most of its wondrous treasures of art, still, with the little book of the "Rites" in hand, we can make out a fairly accurate mental picture of what Durham was in the days of its ancient glory; while with a still greater certainty we can acquaint ourselves with the life led by the citizens of one of these vast cities of prayer and teaching and learning just before it ceased to exist.

The first thing that strikes the student of the "Rites," will be the numberless allusions to the *art* treasures which such a monastery, with its stately abbey-church and surrounding buildings, must have contained. We read not only of the costly worked vestments worn on the many festal days so curiously multiplied in mediæval Christianity, but of curtains or hangings of velvet and silk of various colours, constantly changed, which were hung on certain days before the many shrines and altars; some of these were embroidered, we read, with great flowers of gold, often enriched with pearls and precious stones. The embroidery used in the mediæval monasteries must have been extraordinarily rich and costly. The many shrines are described as literally ablaze with cunning work in gold and silver, and in the less costly brass and iron work. In all times the goldsmith's art was cultivated by the "orders." Special mention is made of solid gold and gilded and silver crosses, crucifixes, censers, candlesticks, basons, fonts for holy water, cruets and patens for the Eucharist, made of the precious metals; of priestly vestments of all descriptions magnificently adorned with gold, and various other ornaments used in the gorgeous ritual of the later mediæval church. The treasury of the Durham monastery was also filled with costly and precious plate; and while the greatest simplicity was strictly followed in the dormitory and apartments of the monks the guest-chamber of the house was furnished with rich and beautiful furniture.

We come, too, upon many mentions of pictures, for painting was among the arts specially cultivated in a great house like that of Durham; pictures of our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, pictures, too, of all the kings and queens of England and Scotland who had been devout and godly founders and benefactors of the famous church. Nor

was sculpture neglected; but all the many images of stone and marble, of alabaster and of precious metal, described so vividly, have disappeared. In many places the carved base of the image remains, and the wall is still shadowed by a dim outline of the figure, which has been long thrown down and broken up. Some few of the beautiful tombs, with fragments of their carved and delicate work, still remain, but most have been destroyed.

We are told of several organs for the maintenance of God's service, and in one instance mention is made of the fine wood and workmanship of the pipes—"very faire, partly gilded upon the outside and inside, with branches and flowers finely gilded."

Again and again in this curious document, the wealth of colour and gold, the curious and costly marbles and alabaster used, the elaborate tracery and carving which adorned the mighty abbey, the cloister, the guest-chambers, and other parts of the huge pile built round the shrine of the loved saint Cuthbert on the rock which overhangs the river Wear, are dwelt upon. It is indisputable that during the Middle Ages the monk was the great artist as well as the chief art-lover in England.

THE HUNTSMAN SALT-CELLAR (15TH CENTURY).

(Presented by Archbishop Chichele to All Souls' College, Oxford, whose property it now is.)

Their way of living is described with some detail. First of all, any idea of a solitary life, lived for the most part in separate cells, like the Carthusian ideal now carried out at the Grande Chartreuse, near Grenoble in Savoy, and in other houses of their still famous order, must be dismissed. In a Benedictine (the principal and by far the most influential of the orders) monastery, the life was from beginning to end social. The brothers worshipped together in the choir of the church or abbey to which the community was attached; they took counsel together daily in the chapter-house; they studied together in the stately cloister or library; they ate together in the refectory; they slept in one vast dormitory. The size of these refectories and dormitories is manifest from the remains, still clearly traceable, of such buildings in Durham, Gloucester, and in other sites of large Benedictine monasteries.

Under the lord prior at Durham or Winchester, or the lord abbot at Gloucester and Bury St. Edmunds (the titles

vary), were gathered a group of inferior officers or obedientaries in strict subordination one to the other, by whom the monks, their dependents, and tenants were ruled. The whole number, including all dependents, in a large house when filled, which was rarely if ever the case in the last century of their existence, amounted to four hundred, or even more. The actual number of professed monks, exclusive of lay brothers and dependents, in an important monastery, rarely seemed to have

THE WESTMINSTER CHASUBLE (LATE 15TH CENTURY), CRIMSON VELVET EMBROIDERED WITH GOLD. (*In the possession of Lord Arundel of Wardour.*)

exceeded a hundred. By the abbot's or the prior's side, as the case might be, stood the first, second, and third priors, lieutenants of the head of the house, ready at once to step into his place, should he at any time be incapacitated from exercising a general supervision over the whole community.

After these dignified officers, who with a few other of the chiefs of departments had separate lodgings of their own, being exempted from much of the ordinary social existence, came a group of officials specially attached to the great church or abbey. The *sacrist* had charge generally of the innumerable services which were performed by night as by day; these services will be presently enumerated. The sacrist, an important official, often had the charge of the library, and acted as chancellor or secretary of the society, and wrote the letters which had to be sent out on legal and other business. After him came the *precentor*, who arranged the elaborate music and singing which formed so large a part of the many services, and which served to break the awful monotony which must have accompanied a life, so many hours of which were spent in worship in the sanctuary. In some of the smaller houses the offices of sacrist and precentor were combined. The precentor in a large house like Durham, Gloucester, Evesham, Bury St. Edmunds, and many others of like rank, presided over the singers, arranged the processions, and exercised under the abbot or prior the chief authority in the church.

The *circa* was an official charged in a great community with watching over the discipline of the services. His little stone desk, hard by the monks' entrance to the choir, is still to be seen near the north gate of the choir of Gloucester. There in the night hours, at matins, or in the deep dawn of the early morning, he would stand and carefully note who was absent from the company as they passed in from the dormitory to prayers; on the following day to the full chapter he would report any absentee monk. The same officer would also, when all were assembled in the choir in these night services, go his quiet round with his little lamp gleaming in the dimly-lighted church, watching carefully to see if any weary brother had fallen asleep in his seat or stall, when he would at once rouse him up again to take his share in the perpetual nightly round of prayer and praise.

The *custos operum*, or master of the works, ranked also high among the chief obedientaries. His was no light duty, the watching over the constant repairs needed in the abbey-church and in the vast hive of buildings which clustered round the house of God. Even in the far-back Plantagenet days, we read in Jocelyn de Brakelonde's charming gossipy chronicle, of the ruined state into which many of the abbey buildings had fallen as early as in the reign of king John, in the monastery of Bury St. Edmunds. Then, too, as we have said, the monk was ever a restless artist, ever an indefatigable architect, who loved to be always adding to, adorning with fresh ornamentation, with new tracery, with beautiful, often with strange, fantastic work, his loved home. Our cathedrals and abbeys, in the exquisite confusion of styles of architecture which they present, tell us how successive generations of monks planned, designed, and carried out new

works. Never was the monk weary of striving to make his beautiful church, his cloister, his many conventual buildings, more beautiful, more richly adorned. Over all these works, the delight nowadays of the antiquarian, the architect, the historian, and of many others who lay no claim to these titles, the master of the works was supreme. We, who after long centuries are content simply to admire and now and again to copy what the vanished monk has done in those abbeys and cathedral buildings, which in their defaced and sadly spoiled condition are still among the glories of our land, owe a large debt to many an unknown, unrecorded master of the works.

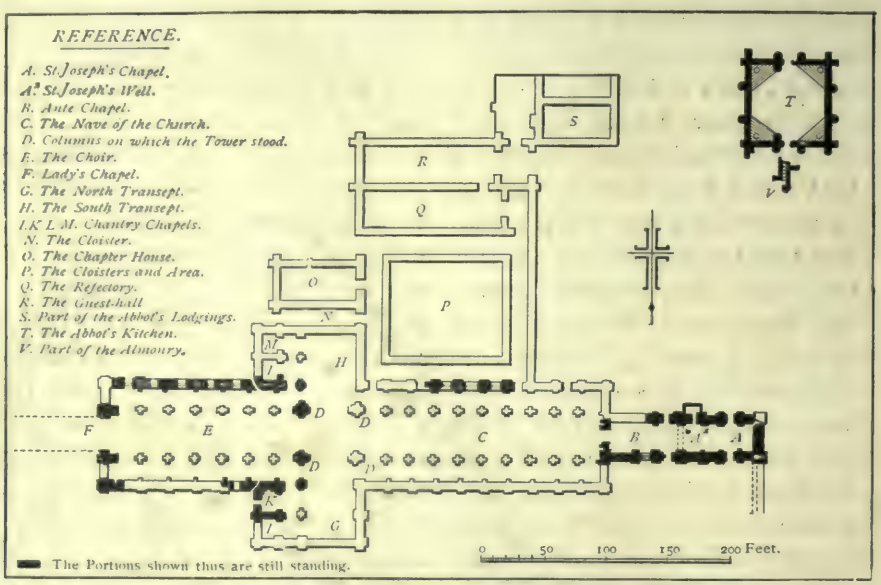
The next group of monastic officials is a more homely one. The first in order was the *receiver* or treasurer. He had the duty of receiving and accounting for the rents of the abbey farms. His office in later days, when from various causes the religious houses grew poorer, must often have been an onerous if not a painful one. The perpetual strain to make ends meet, the finding resources to meet the often exorbitant claims of the sovereign, the calls of the state to contribute to some foreign war, the difficulty of paying the large interest due on sums borrowed to meet such claims, was too often the lot of this official.

An obedientary with the quaint mediæval title of *hordarian* shared with the cellarer and refectorarion the labour—no small one in an important house—of providing for the bodily needs of the numerous company who made up the community. Certain estates belonging to the monastery were usually set aside exclusively for this purpose. These were administered by the hordarian, who derived his somewhat barbarous title from his peculiar duties. He was set over the "hoard," or the supplies of food required for the refectory and infirmary.

Among the other notable obedientaries in a monastery of the larger class, the *infirmarian* occupied a prominent and important position. Tender and loving care for the sick, the ailing, and the infirm especially distinguished the Benedictines. Their infirmaries were usually spacious, and not unfrequently were richly ornamented. The graceful arches, still graceful after a somewhat clumsy attempt at restoration, of the infirmary of the vast Benedictine house of Gloucester, testified to the former existence of stately buildings erected for the sick and aged monk. This hospital, which adjoined the cloister walls, the sick shared with the aged brothers, whose waning strength was insufficient to enable them to take part in the austere life and perpetual services of the house. In this building, or in the little sunny garden adjoining it, the monk spent his last days, without cares and without fears, till he was carried out to burial in the cemetery, God's acre hard by, to lie among the brethren gone before. The infirmarian usually possessed a knowledge of medicine and surgery. These acquirements were not uncommon among the Benedictines.

The guest-master had the charge of entertaining all visitors, all travellers, rich and poor, who claimed the hospitality of the house. Lavish hospitality to travellers, whether as pilgrims—pilgrimage, as we have seen, was a common feature in mediæval religious life—or as merchants, distinguished all monastic establishments. The splendid and noble remains of the

guest-halls of many of the more important religious houses, that are with us to this day, tell us how carefully and even generously this duty was provided for. "Entertainment," says the "Rites of Durham," "was given to all staits, both noble, gentle, and what degree soever that came thither as strangers, ther interteynment not being


REFERENCE.
A. St. Joseph's Chapel.
A². St. Joseph's Well.
B. Aisle Chapel.
C. The Nave of the Church.
D. Columns on which the Tower stood.
E. The Choir.
F. Lady's Chapel.
G. The North Transept.
H. The South Transept.
I.K L M. Chantry Chapels.
N. The Cloister.
O. The Chapter House.
P. The Cloisters and Area.
Q. The Refectory.
R. The Guest-hall
S. Part of the Abbot's Lodgings.
T. The Abbot's Kitchen.
V. Part of the Almonry.
The Portions shown thus are still standing.
0 50 100 150 200 Feet.

PLAN OF GLASTONBURY, A TYPICAL MEDIÆVAL MONASTERY.

vast day-room, and the varied arrangements for study in the cloisters. The duties of such an officer, when the size and complex arrangements of a large Benedictine establishment are borne in mind, were no light ones, and required constant skill and forethought to preserve the necessary decency and cleanliness and customary

inferior to any place in England, both for the goodness of their diets, the sweete and daintie furniture of their lodgings, and generally all things necessarie for traveillers."

Another well-known obedientary in a large monastery, the *camerarius* or chamberlain, must not be forgotten. He had the charge of all the furniture of the dormitory and refectory and guest-chambers, and of the various lodgings and halls of the monastery, including the separate apartments of the higher officials, the monks' stateliness, without exceeding the sum of money set apart for this purpose, an amount which gradually decreased as time went on and the religious communities grew poorer.

There were, besides these important officers, in a Benedictine house of large size a number of subordinate officials, such as cooks, doorkeepers, gardeners, and the like, who need not be specially described. The policy of the monastic orders was rather to multiply offices, with a view of providing the brethren with occupations which would give them an interest in the

GLASTONBURY ABBEY.

well-being of their order, and in the prosperity and discipline of their own particular house.

THE ABBOT'S KITCHEN, GLASTONBURY.

But the centre, of course, of a monastery was its church or abbey. To its adornment the monk devoted century after century all his care and skill in architecture, painting, sculpture. Upon the services of his loved sanctuary untold sums were spent in goldsmith's work, in embroidery for the gorgeous hangings and the still more costly priestly vestments, and in a lesser degree upon the multitude of candles almost perpetually burning, many of these costly lights being absolutely necessary for the various night services.

The following sketch of the ordinary

daily and nightly services in a Benedictine house will give a fairly accurate picture of the way in which a day was spent. The details, of course, slightly varied in the different houses, but in the main our sketch represents what took place in the majority of instances with fair accuracy.

In all seasons the monks rose from their beds at midnight, and went into a cold church—we should remember how terribly cold it must have been through the long winter season, for we have no reason to suppose that the monastic churches of the Middle Ages were ever artificially warmed—and there went through a service, or rather two services of *matins* and *lauds*, which were mostly sung, and lasted about an hour and a half. These services on certain saints' days were considerably prolonged. They then returned to bed again. At 7 a.m. they once more assembled in their church for *prime*, and at its close there was a short meeting in the chapter-house for the transaction of the ordinary business of the house, and especially of matters connected with its discipline. This chapter-house meeting of all the monks, in some communities took place at about 11 o'clock, in others at an earlier hour. A short meal in most houses preceded the gathering in the chapter-house ; but the morning arrangements seemed to have somewhat varied in the different houses.

At 9 came *tierce*, which was followed by high mass and *sext*. Dinner, the principal meal of the day in the fourteenth century and after, was served in the refectory about 11.30 a.m., and during the meal some lesson would be read aloud. After dinner came *nones*, and whilst most of the monks were engaged in that service, the conversi or lay brethren, often a numerous body in a large community, and the monks who had in their turn served the others at dinner, sat down to their meal. Then came a short time set apart, if desired, for sleep, which was followed by active employment of various kinds, by study, or by recreation. *Vespers* were sung at 3 p.m. Then went on again study, recreation, or some other work in which the monk was specially engaged and interested. Supper was usually at 6. At 7.30 came the last service of the day, *compline*, and then at 8 the brethren retired to the dormitory, to sleep until they were roused for the midnight matins.

Up to the period of the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536–1541, with little change in the hours, this had been the unvarying use of the large majority of the religious houses of England. Prayer to and praise of Almighty God in their church or abbey, interspersed with hours of study, had been the principal object of their lives, roughly speaking, for well-nigh five hundred years. In the Durham Rites we read how before the high altar were "three marveilous faire silver basons hung in chaines of silver ; these contained great wax candles, which did burne continually both day and night, in token that the house was always watchinge to God." Many and various are the estimates which men make as to the efficacy of prayer, with a view to change and modify God's purposes towards men ; but few will be found to deny the moral beauty of this conception, which was the common heritage of all the monastic orders. The life-aim of every monastery was the ideal typified by the Durham ever-burning lights : "*The*

house was always watchinge to God"—alas! too often it was only a beautiful but unrealised ideal!

After all, the life of a monk was a hard and austere one. The scoffer has too often chosen it as the butt of his thoughtless pleasantries, but the shafts he aims with so much zest are generally the weapons of ignorance and prejudice. Of course, in all ages there were bad monks, and monasteries where misrule and disorder reigned; but quiet, scholarly research goes far to disprove the assertion that this class of false monks was to be often met with in England in the last age of the existence of monasticism. The daily life we have sketched. That life was sweetened and beautified with few of those luxuries men are ever accustomed to associate with even modest comfort and happiness. The diet varied in different religious houses, and although one of the latest students of monastic life,* after careful examination of many "diet" rolls, does not consider that the "religious," on the whole, fared amiss, there is no doubt but in many—it may be said in the majority of houses—there was a wearying sameness in the food provided, which was, though plentiful, often rough and coarse. It must be borne in mind, too, that most of the brethren were drawn not from the poor labouring folk, but rather from the upper middle class. An examination of the diet rolls shows that condiments, such as mustard, were freely used, especially on the many fast-days. It would appear that the tasteless and somewhat indigestible fish diet became often repugnant.

* Dr. Kitchin, late dean of Winchester, now dean of Durham.

In a climate often damp and chilly like that of England, the monk must in winter have suffered acutely from cold. There were few fires kept up in any monastery. For the monks, save in the common room or in the refectory at "snow time," as it was termed, there was no fire. The common room is described in the "Rites of Durham" as "having a fyre keapt in yt all winter, for the mounckes to cume and warm them at, being allowed no fyre but that only." The same account expressly repeats—"they were allowed no fyre in the dormitory." We meet with constant notices respecting warm clothing, furs, etc., so chill was the atmosphere of the unwarmed great church, the refectory and the dormitory, and above all the cloister walks, where so many hours of a monk's life was spent. Anyone who has had experience of the cold damp "carrells" or study-cells of the once famous Benedictine house of Gloucester, where they are still perfect as on the day of the dissolution in 1540, and where the cloister was evidently mostly glazed as it is now, cannot help wondering how patient study and writing, or illuminating books, could have been carried on under such circumstances. In many cloisters, as for example at Westminster, there seems to have been no glazing; there the monks, as they sat and read or walked, were exposed to the chill winds and damp.

Few and monotonous were the recreations of the monks. The chief of them was perhaps the pacing up and down the cloisters and the little walks of the cloister garden, the somewhat larger garden or orchard, or the gloomy cemetery, where they were one day to lie. This "recreation"

was allowed during certain hours of the day, but in a well-ordered house gossipy talk, as Jocelyn de Brakelonde tells us in his quaint memoirs of the community of St. Edmund at Bury, in the days of king Henry II. and John, was sternly checked by some such obedientary as the "circa," as he moved silently among the brethren during the hours of recreation. There was unlawful recreations of these more youthful and thoughtless dwellers in a monastery, such as cutting and carving the stones with letters and other devices, are occasionally found. Half-way up the winding stairs of the great tower of Gloucester, there is a rough little figure in the perfect dress of a burgher of the city in the time of the Wars of the Roses, evidently the secret work of

THE REFECTORY OF A MONASTERY.
(*By permission, from the drawing by G. Cattermole in the Corporation Art Galleries, Glasgow.*)

a bowling-green for the novices, which the professed monks seem to have used at times.

These novices and the other school-boys, pupils in the house, have left the traces of their games on the stone benches of our Gloucester cloisters, and in other parts of the great building. In these cloisters, where the boys and novices were taught, are some play-boards not obscurely marked in the stones. These game-boards for "fox and geese," "nine men's morris," and other games, are found in similar conventual buildings at Westminster, Norwich, Salisbury, Durham, etc. Other vestiges of a youthful amateur in stone-carving. A beautifully-carved game-board has been recently found in another flight of turret-stairs of the cathedral. Other such curious relics will no doubt be discovered, now that many are found who care for such voices from a vanished past. In some monasteries the monk was allowed to possess and amuse himself with strange pet animals, such as apes, peacocks, falcons, and even tame bears, and the consuetudinary of St. Swithun's at Winchester tells us that the cellarer had the special care of these strange pets of the brotherhood.

We have alluded to the "carrells," those little cells or recesses in the cloister, where the monks who gave themselves to study or to writing and illuminating used to sit. Besides these, there was in most of the larger communities a public scriptorium or mediæval physicians belonged to some monastic order. The Durham "Rites" speak of its "lybrarie," and carefully specify the situation of this storehouse of learning, which the "Rites" tells us was "well replenished with ould written docters and

THE CLOISTERS, GLOUCESTER.

writing chamber, where those marvels in illumination were executed, where many of the books which are now prized so highly, were copied and preserved for us.

Most monasteries possessed a library, large or small. In the greater houses the library contained many books, some of which treated of medical subjects. Not a few among the more famous early other histories and ecclesiastical writers.' The same records mention, also, how after the monks had dined, when they had done their prayers, "that they did returne to the cloyster, and there did studie their bookes until three of the clocke, when they went to evensong. This was their dutie, exercise, and studie every day after they had dyned."

The said monks, went on the "Rites" to say, "were the onlie writers of all the actes and deedes of the bishopps and priors of the abbey church of Durham, and of all the cronacles and stories; and that, also, did write and sett furth all things that was thought worthie to be noted, and what miracles was done every year, and in what month. . . . They were alwaies most virtuouslie occupied, never idle, but ever writing of good and goddly wourkes or studying the Holie Scriptures, to the setting furth of the honour and glorie of God, and for the edifieinge of the people, as well in example of good life and conversacion as by preaching the worde of God. Thus yow may se and perceave how the mounks and religious men were occupied in most godly writing and other exercissis in auncient tyme." But most of all this work of copying, writing, illuminating, and preserving books and treatises—profane as well as religious, and which, but for the monastic houses, would have been lost—came to an end with the invention of the printing-press at the end of the fifteenth century.

Much has been said and written concerning the evil example set by the monastic orders in matters of health and cleanliness; and there is no doubt that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, if not later, an ostentatious neglect of these matters was too manifest in the teaching given and pattern set by the religious communities. This curious neglect of the body seems to have been based upon two considerations. The one, and by far the weightier, as it was connected with what the monks deemed the true end of existence, looked upon all disregard of the perishable and dying body as acceptable to God. The other was of far less moment, and appears to have been connected with the notion that dirt was a preservative against cold. There is a passage in archbishop Lanfranc's decrees (end of the eleventh century) which directs the chamberlain of the house to change the hay in the monks' pallets at least once a year, and once a year to clean out the dormitory. This injunction of Lanfranc, a great friend to the monks, gives us some idea of the state of a monastery in the days of the early Norman kings. What must have been the condition of a large chamber in which thirty or forty or even more monks slept for a year on the same hay? Another decree of this same Lanfranc prescribes one bath a year for the dwellers in a religious house, just before the Christmas feast. The scene which followed the martyrdom of Thomas à Becket* illustrates only too well the above remarks.

But as the Middle Ages advanced, a very different state of things was by degrees introduced. We find from entries in monastic records such notes as the one in the "Consuetudines in Refectorio" of St. Swithun at Winchester, which charges the prior of that important Benedictine community with the duty of strewing the refectory with new rush mats seven times in the year. These rush mats formed a considerable item in the furniture of a mediæval monastery. They were often woven by the monks themselves, who slept under them or on them, prayed on them, and lay on them when dying. They were harder than the straw litter, and more wholesome. The same consuetudinary of

* See p. 204.

St. Swithun's tells us, too, that one of the chamberlain's duties was to renew the canvas cloths on the refectory table from time to time, and to provide napkins to wipe out and cleanse the cups of silver and wood used in the ordinary meals. Provision also appears in the same record for cleaning out the refectory by the porter.

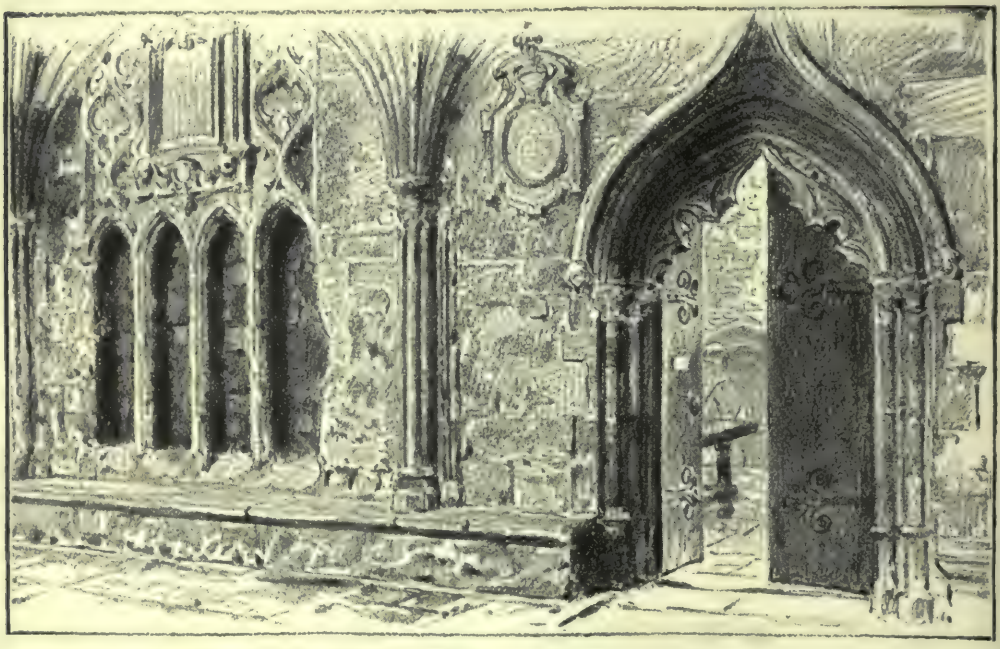
In the Durham "Rites" we read of a "faire almerie (close to the refectory door) joyned in the wall. All the forepart of the almerie was carved work, for to give ayre to the towels, and every mouncke had a key to the said almerie, wherein did hinge clean towels for the mounckes to drye their hands on when they washed and went to dinner." Such an almerie, hard by the refectory door, with the iron hinge of the vanished gate, to which each monk had a key, and the beautiful carved open tracery above to let in the air to dry the towels, is still to be seen in the cloister of the Benedictine house of Gloucester, opposite the lavatory, with its exquisitely carved roof only slightly injured by time, and not much defaced by a troop of Cromwell's horse which, tradition says, were once stabled there. The Durham "Rites," dwelling on this advance in the principles of cleanliness, describe minutely the "faire laver or conduit for the monks to wash their hands and faces at, covered with lead and all of marble, having many little conditts or spouts of brasse, with xxiiii lockes of brass." They tell also of "a bell hung near the conditt door to give warning at a leaven (eleven) of the clock for the mouncks to cumme and wash and dyne, having their closets or almeries kept always with swete and clene towels"—a great advance on the habits of a Benedictine monastery of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The discipline of Durham, as pictured in the "Rites" in the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth century, must have been very rigid. No woman was allowed to come into the body of the church or into any of the precincts of the monastery. The Lady Chapel was first erected, it appears, in 1154 for women to worship in, but subsequently, the Lady Chapel being considered too near the shrine of St. Cuthbert, a new and exquisite piece of work at the west end of the abbey was built, "wherunto yt was lawfull for women to enter, having no holie place before where they might have lawful accesse unto for there cumforthe and consolation."

In the "dorter" or dormitory every monk had a little chamber of wainscot to himself. Every little chamber was partitioned off, and the novices had also little chambers, each separate, and in the dormitory every night there was a search by the sub-prior, who called over every name in each little chamber, to guard against all disorder. This roll-call was made both before and after midnight. The sub-prior's chamber was "the first in the dorter for seeing of good order keapt." The doors of the house, too, were rigorously locked at 6 o'clock every evening, and were kept in the sub-prior's care until 7 o'clock the following morning.

If a monk were found guilty of any grave moral offence, the punishment was exceedingly severe. At Durham, underneath the master of the infirmary's chamber, was a strong prison called the lynghouse, which was "ordained for all such as were greate offenders." The guilty monk

was to be immured in this underground dungeon "for the space of one hole year in cheynes." No one was to have access to this dungeon save the master of the infirmary, "who did let downe there meate thorough a trap-door on a corde, being a great distance from them." It would be interesting to know if such offenders often emerged alive from this living death.



REFECTORY DOOR AND WASHING PLACE, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

To Lanfranc, the friend and minister of William the Conqueror, the first Norman archbishop, the great monastic reformer of the eleventh century, the kindler of light and earnestness among the Norman clergy, and to Anselm, his greater successor at Canterbury, are owing, in a large degree, the plan of life, devised originally by Benedict of Nurscia, in the province of Spoleto, in the beginning of the sixth century, which we have been sketching, led by the monks in England in that vast network of religious communities which covered our country from 1070 to 1541. In many ways it was a noble as well as an enduring conception, and in a rough, stern age, did an incalculable service. It was a life with a lofty ideal, and the ideal was not often reached; but it was something in that age of selfish violence and high-handed tyranny men call the Middle Ages, that there should be an ideal of life which men who earnestly desired to serve God with all their heart might strive after. It did its work, on the whole; but the work, as far as England was concerned, was done when the sands of the fifteenth century were running out.

While the present writer, however, is intensely convinced that this monastic life, on the whole, powerfully influenced our country for good, and trained up not a few earnest and God-fearing souls, who in their turn served well the generation in which their lot for themselves havens of refuge, in which they would be sheltered from its wild tumults and stormy passions. This teaching ignored the solemn prayer of the Founder of Christianity, "not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the

Photo: Harvey Barton, Bristol.

THE BELL TOWER, EVESHAM, THE TWO PARISH CHURCHES IN THE BACKGROUND.

was cast, such a study as this would be incomplete, and indeed unfair, did it not call attention to one cardinal error which is inseparable from the monastic ideal. Men of the austere, uncompromising school to which Lanfranc and Anselm and Bernard of Clairvaux belonged, taught that religious men could best fulfil God's purpose by abandoning the world, leaving it to follow its own way, and by securing evil." The ultimate result of it was to beget a spirit of stern exclusiveness among the "religious." Their own salvation, their own safety, with little reference to that of the world outside, was really what the true monk aimed at. "Self-centred, having few interests outside those cloister walls where they proposed to pass their lives, under the shadow of which they hoped to die, they regarded themselves as a chosen

band, they believed themselves to be moving heavenwards as a company and all together. The whole notion underlying their existence was that of each helping the others within the narrow limits of the community. On the other hand, their religion had hardly any outward tendency —they had no vocation to save the outer world. The monks hardly realised that those outside were their brethren, hungry and naked, full of needs and sufferings; the provision for their stately church, their community, their administration, made them hard and unfeeling towards others, and this was fostered and aggravated by their own firm belief that they were, in a sense, especially God's elect, the heirs of safety here and of salvation hereafter."*

This spirit of exclusive selfishness conspicuously manifested itself in the architecture of the noblest and fairest of those matchless homes of prayer, which the spirit of devotion and enthusiasm for religion guided them to build and adorn. In every great minster and abbey, the choir was looked upon as the most sacred part of the church. This was beautified and cared for with an especial care, but was rigidly reserved for the use of the monks, and the servants and lay brothers of the house. In some few of the monastic churches—such as in the lordly abbey of Evesham—the nave as well as the choir was generally closed to the outer world; and another and less important church was erected close by, for worshippers who belonged not to the charmed inner circle of professed monks and their servants. In the immediate precincts of the mighty abbey of Evesham, to take a well-known example, there were two of these churches. Thus, when the day of destruction arrived, the mass of the people cared little or nothing about the ruin of a building, however beautiful and venerable and sacred, from which they had been shut out. At Evesham, save for one solitary tower, the glorious abbey has disappeared; while the two people's churches are still standing, and still used by devout congregations from the little town built originally under the shadow of the vanished abbey.

There is no doubt but that the apathy with which the people of England viewed the downfall of monasticism, was largely due to this narrow spirit, the natural outcome of the monastic life. The monk, notwithstanding his splendid record of service to religion, to art, to letters, and indeed well-nigh everything that made life beautiful and desirable in a nation, had failed to establish any claim to the people's hearts, and when he fell at the bidding of a tyrannical and unscrupulous king, his fate at the time was almost unpitied and unnoticed.

Monastic Christianity finds its most complete expression in that small and exquisite manual of devotion put out in the fifteenth century, known as the "Imitation of Christ." No book outside the Holy Scriptures has been so often reprinted or so frequently translated. (There are, it is said, sixty translations into French alone.) It was written, as is well known, in the Latin tongue. "Its boundless popularity reminds us that it supplies some imperious want in the Christianity of mankind; but, like monasticism, it is absolutely and entirely selfish in its aims

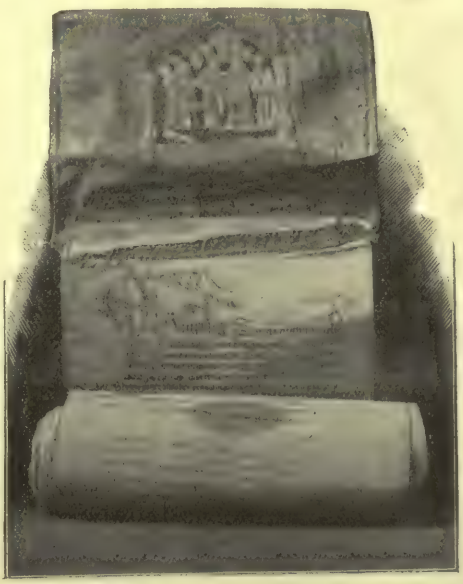
* Dean Kitchin: "Notes on the Obedientiary Rolls of St. Swithun."

as in its acts. Its sole, single, exclusive object is the purification, the elevation of the individual soul of the man, absolutely isolated from his kind. With no fears, no hopes, no sympathies of our common nature, he has absolutely withdrawn himself not only from the cares, the sins, the trials, but from the duties, the moral and religious fate of the world." *

Dominic and Francis of Assisi were conscious of this want in the work of the great orders. The Benedictines and Carthusians of their day and time were never missionaries; they touched not, nor did they make any real effort to touch, the mass of uncared-for souls living, dying, at their gates. Hence the idea common to both of these great men, of founding mendicant orders. The acknowledged aim of the Dominican and Franciscan friar was to spread abroad the glad message of salvation, which the monk chose mainly to confine within the precincts of his own loved monastery. The work of the mendicant friar was not the salvation of the individual monk, but that of others through him. The rapid growth and wonderful popularity of the friars, tells us with no uncertain voice that, in some ways at least, *they* had won the affections of the people among whom they lived. It is hardly too much to say, that the coming of the friar put off the downfall of monasticism in England for some two centuries. *

* Dean Milman: "Latin Christianity."

* The above account of the life of a great monastery is based on the "Rites of Durham," published by the Surtees Society, and upon various other contemporary monastic records. I have also ventured to borrow from a paper of my own, "The Passing of the Monk," published in 1895 in the *Quarterly Review*.



THE BEDE ROLL (DURHAM CATHEDRAL) ASKING THE PRAYERS OF THE VARIOUS MONASTERIES FOR THE SOULS OF PRIOR EBCHESTER, WHO DIED 1456, AND PRIOR BURNABY, WHO DIED 1468.

(*By permission of C. P. MacCarthy, Esq.*)

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE CHURCH AT THE DAWN OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

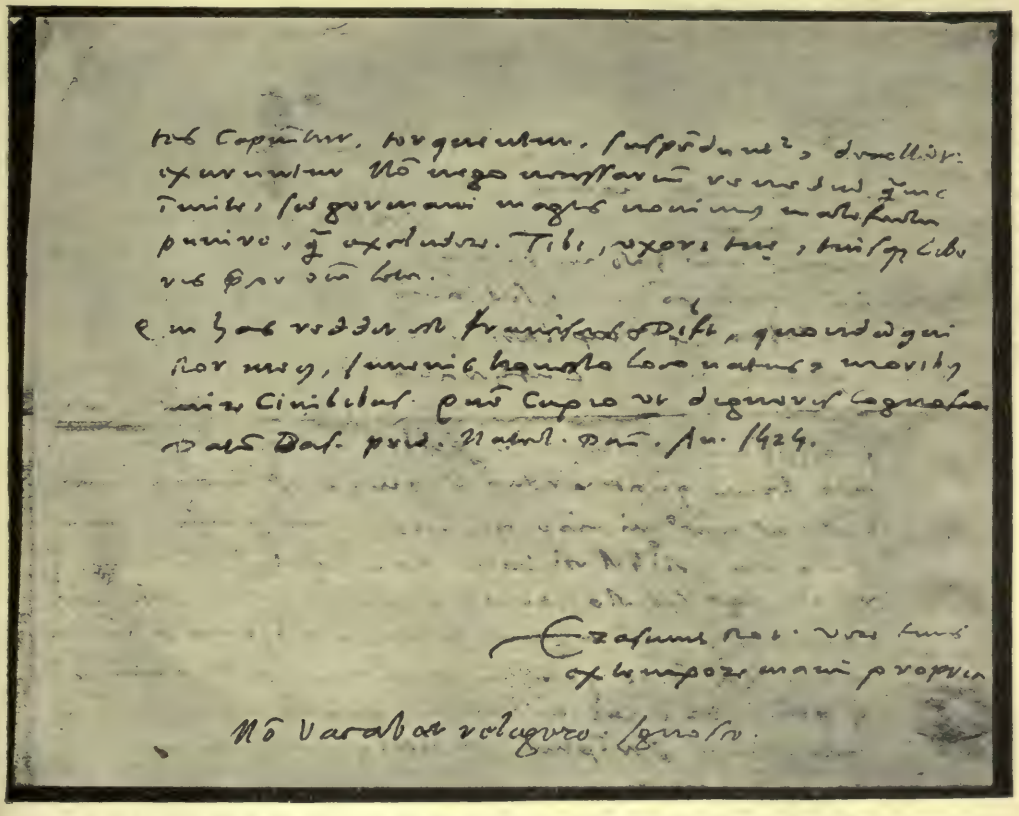
Value of Erasmus as a Witness—His Character—His Picture of the Weakness of the Church—Religion Confounded with Ritual—Cautious Moderation of the Witness—Testimony to Corruption in Doctrine and Practice—Bad Character of the Mass-Priests—Erasmus Mourns nevertheless over the Excesses of the German Reformers—Letter of Wicelius—Testimony of Dean Colet to Ecclesiastical Abuses in England—Pilgrimage of Erasmus and Colet to Canterbury—Evidence of Sir Thomas More to the Excesses of Mariolatry.

THE most fair, and perhaps the most reliable picture which we possess of the church of the west (including England) in the early part of the sixteenth century, is painted in the later letters of Erasmus—letters in which the great scholar poured out his whole heart to correspondents of various ranks and nationalities, to statesmen and his private friends, to ecclesiastics of high degree, including bishops, cardinals, royal personages, and even the Pope himself. The special work of Erasmus for his day and generation will come before us in another chapter: here we only cite him as a witness. These letters, very different from his epistles penned in early and middle life, are rarely bitter; sorrowful often, now and again almost despairing: Many were written under the shadow of death, which Erasmus felt could not be far distant. They were composed, too, at a period when the scholar evidently regretted the bitterness and acrimony of his earlier days, and now and again even mourned over results to which he felt he had largely contributed. With Luther and the German reforms he had little sympathy, and he evidently viewed the acts of the more advanced Protestants with dislike and dread.

These later letters, then, out of which we shall draw the materials of our picture, contained the thoughts of the profoundest scholar and theologian of the day; of a man, too, who was, if not in sympathy with the leaders of the church in England and on the Continent, certainly not at enmity with them. Many of these admired him with an ungrudging admiration, some even loved him with a real love. He might have worn a mitre had he pleased, even selecting the see which would have best suited his precarious health and given him all opportunities to pursue his favourite studies; and though he declined the honour, he did so with a kindly grace, as conscious of the friendship and consideration in the highest quarters which prompted the offer. In the last years of this busy life we find him even wavering whether or no he should accept the lofty dignity of a cardinal of the Roman church; his hesitation apparentiy being based upon the consciousness, not of any unfitness for the distinguished position, but of his inability through want of private fortune to fulfil its requirements. Indeed, the student of Erasmus's career, as he lays down the many-coloured record of his eventful life, feels that had that life been prolonged even a little, the red hat

would probably have been worn by the scholar whose praise, with good reason, is still in all the churches.

Words, then, which crystallise the ripe thoughts of such a man must have for us a deep meaning. As we read them, we feel that much of the life they describe is truly pictured. Far removed from the violence and impetuosity of a Luther, whom, while admiring him for his honesty and bravery, he gently condemned, declining altogether to share in his passion for destruction; equally removed from the unbending apologists of Roman errors, Erasmus in his later days, in intimate communion with the old church, the friend of Pope and cardinal and bishop, gives us in his letters a picture of the church which must convince any unbiassed student of the past, that a reformation at once of doctrine and of practice was absolutely needed.



END OF A LETTER FROM ERASMUS TO NICHOLAS EVERARD ON THE SUBJECT OF LUTHER'S MARRIAGE.
(*British Museum.*)

The picture drawn by the old man, educated by long experience and years of patient study—in his old age a gentle, friendly, loving critic indeed—was the picture verily of a dying church. Let us

paint it from his own words. In quoting the following extracts,* it must not be supposed for an instant that we mean to indicate entire sympathy with the policy of conciliation or with the *via media* suggested in them. Had the writer's wishes been carried out, although the church, purified of many glaring abuses, purged of much false doctrinal teaching, would have been generally strengthened and invigorated; yet such a partial reformation as he evidently longed for would have left her still burdened with many practices, ancient perhaps, but certainly not traceable to primitive Christianity, and pledged to doctrines many of them utterly unknown to the inspired teachers of the New Testament, and even to writers and theologians of the first three centuries. Besides all this, the dead hand of Rome would still have pressed with much of its old chilling weight upon all the "reformed" churches of the west in communion with it. But Erasmus is chosen as the best contemporary witness of the state of the sixteenth century church, not only on account of his rare ability, but because, from his manifest leanings to the old form of mediæval Christianity, his description of the errors of the church he loved and wished to preserve, with certain purifying changes, is certain not to be exaggerated. And yet the picture he draws will surely satisfy any fair-minded critic that a great and drastic reformation was imperatively necessary, if the church was still to preserve its commanding and beneficent influence among men.

See how calmly and beautifully he writes to Louis Marlianus, Bishop of Juy, in Gallicia: "Christ I know; Luther I know not. The Roman church I know, and death will not part me from it till the church departs from Christ. I approve of those who stand by the Pope, but I could wish them wiser than they are. . . . I would have the church purified of evil, lest the good in it suffer by connection with what is indefensible . . . I have sought to save the dignity of the Roman pontiff, the honour of Catholic theology, and the welfare of Christendom. . . . Every wise man knows that doctrines and usages have been introduced into the church which have no real sanction, partly by custom, partly through obsequious canonists, partly by scholastic definitions, partly by the tricks and arts of secular sovereigns. Such excrescences must be removed, though the medicine must be administered cautiously, lest it make the disorder worse, and the patient die."

Erasmus felt, and felt truly, that many of the disorders of Christendom had arisen from the dogmas which the church and the priests had forced upon the people. Piety was too often held to be the acceptance of these dogmas, impiety to be doubt or disagreement. Hence religion was inextricably mixed up with a humanly invented ritual, and morals were forgotten. Writing to duke George of Saxony, he says: "I will speak my mind freely. Christendom is being asphyxiated with formulas and human inventions. Nothing

* The extracts from Erasmus, both in this chapter and the two following, are, by the kind permission of Messrs. Longmans and Co., mainly taken from the translations by Mr. Froude, first given in the Oxford Lectures (1893-4), and published in "The Life and Letters of Erasmus," 1895.

is heard of but dispensations, indulgences, and the powers of the Pope." In another letter to the same duke George he says: "The world was besotted with ritual, scandalous monks were ensnaring and strangling consciences, theology had become sophistry, dogmatism had grown to madness, and, besides, there were unspeakable priests and bishops and Roman officials." And yet, in spite of these strong expressions, Erasmus in the same letter considered it was a case for compromise and agreement. "If you put out the fire by force," he wrote, "it will burst up again."

In the midst of all his deep indignation at the corruptions which were sapping all the life of the church, we see the famous scholar again and again striving rather to mend than to end the existing state of things; now grieving over the dogged obstinacy of the hierarchy, refusing to see the awful corruption of religion and the idolatrous degradation into which so many of the most solemn services had fallen; now vexed and dismayed at the ruthless destruction and wholesale condemnation by Luther and his school of much that was venerable and beautiful. Against this longing of Erasmus to reform rather than to destroy, Luther was very bitter, and he did not hesitate to accuse the scholar of half-heartedness. "Erasmus," he once wrote, "should leave theology alone, and give his mind to other subjects. Theology demands seriousness and sincerity of heart and love for God's word." The German reformer in his zeal and earnestness forgot that had it not been for Erasmus, and his rescuing the true text of the New Testament from oblivion, no Reformation on conservative lines would have been possible.

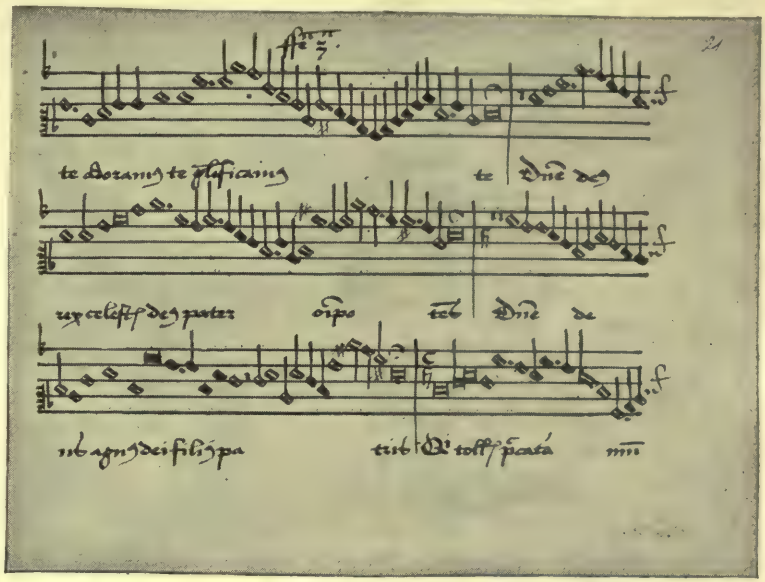
Such a letter as Erasmus wrote in 1528 to the elector Herman, archbishop of Cologne, who afterwards joined the Lutherans and was deposed for it, was simply maddening to one like Luther. "The mass," so runs this celebrated epistle to Herman, "has been made a trade for illiterate and sordid priests, and a contrivance to quiet the consciences of reprobates. So the cry is raised, 'Abolish the mass, put it away, make an end of it!' Is there no middle course? Cannot the mass be purified? Saint-worship has been carried so far that Christ has been forgotten. Therefore respect for the saints is idolatry, and orders founded in their names must be dissolved. Why so violent a remedy? Too much has been made of rituals and vestments; but we might save, if we would, the useful part of such things. Confession has been abused, but it could be regulated more strictly. We might have fewer priests and fewer monks, and those we keep might be better of their kind. If the bishops will only be moderate, things might end well after all; but we must not hurt the corn in clearing out the tares." But his heart was very heavy, in spite of his kindly hope of some *via media* being generally and by universal consent adopted. This comes out often in such expressions as his words to the bishop of Augsburg in 1528: "The state of the church distracts me." Things were very evil, and the kindly scholar knew it too well.

Notwithstanding Luther's fierce denunciation of Erasmus, saintly reformers like Melancthon loved the dying scholar, and

prayed that his views might be adopted. In 1530 Melancthon, for instance, writes to him thus: "I hope your words will weigh with him (the emperor Charles V.). Continue your good works, and deserve the thanks of posterity. You cannot use your influence to better purpose. We have given in our views without condemning others. We are told that our concessions are too late. . . . Great changes are imminent. God grant that our rulers may be so guided that the church is not wrecked in the process."

MARTIN LUTHER.
(*From the portrait by Louis Cranach.*)

In a letter written from Freiburg in 1529, Erasmus draws a terrible picture of the state of religion in that period when, thanks largely to his own labours, men were awakening to the knowledge of what true Christianity meant. "Alas!" he wrote, "Christianity has sunk so low that scarce a man knows now what calling on the Lord means. One looks to cardinals and bishops, another to kings, another to the black battalions of monks and divines. What do they want? What do they expect from protectors who care nothing for Catholic piety, and care only to recover their old power and enjoyments? We were drunk or asleep, and God has sent these stern schoolmasters to wake us up. The rope has been overstrained: it might have stood if they had slackened it a little, but they would rather have it break than save it by concession. The Pope is the head of the church, and as such deserves to be honoured; he stretched his authority too far, and so the first strand of the rope parted. Pardons and indulgences were tolerable within limits; monks and commissaries filled the world with them to line their own pockets. In every church were the red boxes and the crosses and the papal arms, and the people were forced to buy. So the second strand went. Then there was the invocation of saints. The images in churches at first served for ornaments and examples. By-and-by the walls were covered with scandalous pictures. The cult ran to idolatry. So parted a

third strand. The singing of hymns was an ancient and a pious custom; but when music was introduced fitter for weddings and banquets than God's service, and the sacred words were lost in the affected intonation, so that no word in the liturgy was spoken plainly, away went another. What is more solemn than the mass? But when stupid vagabond priests learn up two or three masses, and repeat them over and over as a cobbler makes shoes; when notorious profligates officiate at the Lord's table, and the sacredest of mysteries is sold for money — well, this strand is almost gone too. Secret confession may be useful, but when it is employed to extort money out of the terrors of fools, . . . this part of the cord will not last much longer either."

PAGE FROM A COLLECTION OF MASSES FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK, FOR FOUR VOICES, PROBABLY USED IN THE ROYAL CHAPEL, EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY. (*British Museum.*)

Writing to an English bishop (about 1528), he especially dwells upon confessions, which he says were notoriously betrayed; such confessions were enjoined, not to benefit men's souls, but to gather harvests out of their purses, to learn their secrets, and to rule in their houses. He complains also of the extravagant importance attached to fasting, and says there were too many holy days. Alluding to the necessity for reform of the religious communities among the mendicants, Erasmus, in the same letter to the unnamed English bishop, says: "The most respectable, if not the largest part of these communities desire it themselves. To abolish them is a rude remedy. It has been done in some places (*i.e.* in Germany), but they ought to be brought back to their original purpose as schools of piety; and it will be a good day for the monks when they are reformed. They must not be allowed to live longer in idleness. Their exemptions must be cancelled, and they must be placed under the bishops; and as to their images, the people must be taught that they are no more than signs. It were better if there were none at all, and if prayer was only addressed to Christ."

Erasmus was very severe upon the evil character and lives of too many of the priests of the church of that time. Speaking of the over-zeal of German reformers, in a letter which Froude considers was meant for the eye of the emperor Charles V., he says: "They (the reformers) will have no more priests. It would be better to have priests of learning and piety, and to provide that orders are not hastily entered into. There would be fewer of them, but better three good than three hundred bad. Debauched priests, who do nothing but mumble masses, are generally hated. Do away with these hirelings, and allow but one celebration a day in the churches. Indulgences, with which the monks so long fooled the world, with the connivance of the theologians, are now exploded."

In 1530, writing to the bishop of Hildesheim, he again with extreme anger complains of the lives and conversation of these mass-priests. "In earlier times there was but one celebration in a day; now, partly from superstition, partly from avarice, the saying of masses has become a trade like shoemaking or bricklaying—a mere means of making a livelihood. And again, some attention should be paid to the priest's character; dress and office are not enough: the life must answer to the function. Nowadays, when the celebration is over, the man who has offered the sacrifice adjourns to drinking parties and loose talk, or to cards or dice, or goes hunting, or lounges in idleness. While he is at the altar angels wait on him; when he leaves it he seeks the refuse of mankind. It is not decent. Priests should not by their loose living teach heretics to despise the ineffable mystery." But he by no means includes all the clergy in this evil catagory. In another letter, also bearing the date of 1530, we come upon this passage: "Some are saints, like the archbishop of Canterbury (Warham) and the bishops of London and Rochester."

Yet, with all his early memories and detestation of the monastic life, which had been forced upon him; with all his riper experience of what he justly deemed false interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, of false teaching, of purely man-invented doctrines, which marred all the work and influence of the church; in spite of his wide knowledge of evil living in the case of many—very many—of the church's accredited ministers; in spite, too, of his accurate acquaintance with the corrupt ways and fatal policy of the see of Rome, which he condemned with a terrible condemnation, even though the lordly prelate who ruled at the Vatican was his sincere friend and admirer; in spite of all these melancholy facts, Erasmus feared the great reformer Luther, and even while he loved the man for his honest outspoken words and his fearless passionate acts, dreaded their effects.

This is what the prince of scholars feared and dreaded. In Germany, before 1530 well-nigh two-thirds of the German nation had accepted the scheme of reformation too hastily sketched out by Luther and his disciples. Then a Communion Service something like our own was substituted for the mass: so far good. But the German reformation did not stop there; bishops and episcopal ordination were dispensed with as occasions of superstition. German Christianity has rued the day

when it thus tore up Catholic traditions, which can be traced up to aspostolic and sub-apostolic times. Erasmus mourned over much of this, in such words as these: "Can these gospellers have no patience with men who cling to doctrines sanctioned by ages, and taught by Popes and councils and saints, and cannot gulp down the new wine?"

"There is much," wrote Erasmus, as early as 1524, to Melancthon, "in Luther's teaching that I dislike; he runs everything which he touches into extravagance. It is true Christendom is corrupt, and needs the rod. . . . Luther sees certain things to be wrong, and in flying blindly at them causes more harm than he cures. . . . . Is it so great a thing to have removed images and changed the canon of the mass? What good is done by telling foolish lads that the Pope is antichrist, that confession carries the plague, that they cannot do right if they try, that good works and merits are a vain imagination, that free-will is an illusion, that all things hold together by necessity, and that man can do nothing of himself? Such things are said. You will tell me that Luther does not say them, that only idiots say them; yes, but Luther encourages men who say them . . . Would that Luther had tried as hard to improve Popes and princes as to expose their faults."

"In some German states," he writes in another letter, "the Pope is antichrist, the bishops are hobgoblins, the priests swine, the princes tyrants, the monasteries Satan's conventicles, and the power is in the hands of Gospel mobs, who are readier to fight than to reason." How these mobs, thus fatally taught, acted, our scholar had personal experience of in 1529, when the ecclesiastical revolution reached Basle, where he was then residing, and where he, not many years after, closed his brilliant life with its many lights and shades. This is how he describes the acts, not violent, but calmly and deliberately carried out with the consent of the majority of the governing body of the renowned and wealthy city: "Smiths and carpenters were sent to remove the images from the churches; the roods and unfortunate saints were cruelly handled. . . . Not a statue was left in church, niche, or monastery. The paintings on the walls were whitewashed. Everything combustible was burnt; what would not burn was broken to pieces. Nothing was spared, however precious or beautiful." And in another letter of the same date he thus describes the strange fury: "As it was, no blood was shed, but there was a cruel assault on altars, images, and pictures." After this the great scholar-theologian refused to remain in Basle; he was sorry, he said, "to leave it, but if I stayed I should seem to approve of what had been done."

We were able to describe with some detail the church and its life in England during the second half of the fifteenth century. Our knowledge of this time was singularly assisted by bishop Pecock's vivid and picturesque writings, which told us how the teaching and practices of the Church of England appeared to one seated in its high places, and by the interesting Paston correspondence, which showed us how the church influenced the quiet family life of the middle classes. Certain acts of contemporary ecclesiastical synods and convocations of the clergy made up our picture,

which is pretty full of detail. But for the early part of the century which witnessed the Reformation we have with us fewer English materials. It would seem eminently desirable that some picture of the church, its life and influence, its shortcomings, and its grievous errors, which so excited our people during the quarter of a century which immediately preceded the momentous struggle, should be painted. "I believe," said the picturesque historian, to whose edition of many of the great scholar's letters we are here so largely indebted,* "that you will best see what it really was, if you will look at it through the eyes of Erasmus." We have taken his advice, and told our little story of those thirty years almost all in the very words of that marvellous man who was the principal hero of the period in question, pointing out reasons why his view was probably the true one. The great scholar and theologian was a "laudator temporis acti"—was one who could see, dimly perhaps, but still with no imperfect vision, the beauty and the holiness of the past. And what he writes with his tear-dimmed eyes of the churches of the continent of Europe, is absolutely true of the Church of England in the same sad age. Indeed England, which Erasmus knew thoroughly and loved well, supplied not a few of the materials of his melancholy but too true picture.

JOHN COLET, DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S.
(*From the Drawing by Holbein.*)

One more quotation from the Erasmus correspondence. One of the latest biographers of the famous scholar (Mr. Froude) considers that the thoughts of the letter of George Wicelius to his friend perhaps expressed the thoughts of millions. It bears date 1533, only some three years before the end of that brilliant busy life. "I can think of nothing but the council" (a general council of the church to take in hand the burning questions which were then agitating men). "Our miseries will never end till the cause of them is removed. War will settle nothing, and will leave an incurable ulcer. Germany is rent in two. Christianity itself is in peril. O ears of Rome! O heart of Rome! deaf and dead to the one thing needful, and buried in the pleasures of the world! Have not Catholics waited long enough?

* Mr. Froude.

Will you do nothing for the poor flock of Christ? Will not our cries move you at last? Our hope is that the emperor will lay demands before the court of Rome which it will be ashamed to refuse, and persuade or weary it into compliance. What Luther's party will do I know not.

OLD ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.

. . . Luther himself will be less violent when he hears how often learned men think of him. His haughty crest will droop and his horns drop off when he is no longer on his own dunghill, and has to defend his theories of yesterday against the sages of Christendom. But you, Erasmus, of all men must be there." [Alas for that council and its unhappy results! The voice of the great master, which might have charmed the fathers of Trent into paths of true reform and wise conciliation, was hushed some nine years before that memorable assembly met.]* "You plead age and illness. Were I emperor, I would take no excuses from you. . . . You can prove—you can answer—you can explain as no other living man can do. You can silence the rival fanatics. We will not listen to Luther. We will not listen to the sophists of the schools. We will listen to Erasmus and to those who think like Erasmus—to those who love Christianity better than they love a faction."

Among those who thought like Erasmus was Colet, the dean of St. Paul's, whose life and vast influence in the Church of

* Erasmus died A.D. 1536, and the first session of the Council of Trent was held in December, 1545.

England during the first two decades of the sixteenth century will be presently dealt with. He died in 1519. Colet was the most famous preacher of his time, and a few extracts from his noble sermon preached before the convocation of bishops and clergy, especially summoned in 1512 for the extirpation of heresy, will show us how grave and serious some of the more glaring abuses which disfigured the life of the Church of England in the early years of the reign of king Henry VIII. appeared to earnest and devout men like him. These abuses Colet and his school of thought were burningly anxious to see corrected from within, rather than from without. The sermon was a memorable one in many respects, and is distinguished not only for its lofty tone and winning eloquence, but, considering the audience to whom it was addressed, for its exceeding boldness. Though gentle and persuasive in its language, it was outspoken and fearless, even daring. It veiled nothing—went to the root of the matter, lashing with terrible earnestness the glaring faults and fatal shortcomings of the most important and influential of the English hierarchy, many of whom were doubtless spellbound as they listened to the winning voice of the preacher pouring forth scathing denunciations of the life they were leading, and the fatal example they were setting.

"Fathers," he said, "you are come together to-day to hold a council. I wish that at length you would consider the reformation of ecclesiastical affairs, for never was it more necessary. Never did the state of the church more need your endeavours, for the church is become foul and deformed. . . . Nothing has so disfigured the face of the church as the secular and worldly way of living on the part of the clergy." (His text was taken from Romans xii. 2.)

He began by speaking of the English bishops. "What eagerness and hunger after honour and dignity are found in these days among ecclesiastical persons! What a breathless race from benefice to benefice, from a lower to a higher!" He was here specially alluding to the way bishoprics were attained and exchanged. A bishopric, when Colet preached, was a thing to be sued for or purchased by money or influence. It mattered little what was the age of the candidate, whether he lived abroad or in England, whether he was illiterate or educated. The very general custom among bishops was to use their sees as stepping-stones to yet higher ones. For instance, in Colet's time the bishop of Bath and Wells had been bishop of Hereford; the bishop of Chichester had been translated from the see of St. David's; the bishop of Lincoln had been bishop of Lichfield; Audley of Salisbury had filled in succession the sees of Rochester and Hereford; Fitzjames of London had first been bishop of Rochester, then of Chichester; the famous Fox of Winchester had occupied successively the sees of Exeter, Bath and Wells, and Durham. And these numerous and rapid promotions were not a reward for any special diligence or success in pastoral duties, or for profound studies in theological lore, but were too often the guerdon of success in purely secular and political affairs, such as in foreign embassies. Some were foreigners, and rarely, if ever,

even visited the sees over which they were placed. The bishop of Bath and Wells, for instance, was a foreigner, and lived altogether abroad. The bishop of Worcester owed his mitre to a papal provision, and lived and died at Rome. His predecessor and successor also both were foreigners.

He then spoke of the lives led by the "most part of priests." They "give themselves up to feasting and banqueting, spend themselves in vain babbling, take part in sports and plays, devote themselves to hunting and hawking, are drowned in the delights of this world, patronise those who cater for their pleasure." He spoke bitterly, too, of the universal seeking after rich benefices. "We rush after them with such eagerness that we care not how many and what duties, or how great benefices we take, if only they have great revenues."

The incessant worldly occupations in which many priests and bishops entangled themselves are sharply commented upon. The clergy and priests, neglecting spiritual things, involve themselves in earthly business; from this neglect, he said, many evils follow. "We are troubled in these days with heretics, but this heresy is not so pestilential to us and the people as the vicious and depraved lives of the clergy; for as Bernard, that holy father of so great and ardent spirit, told his people that there were two kinds of heretical pravity, one of perverse doctrine, the other of perverse living, of which the latter is the greater and most pernicious. Such wicked priests are by so much worse than heretics, as actions are stronger than words. . . . Reformation," said Colet on this memorable occasion, addressing the prelates present, "must needs begin with you, our fathers, and then afterwards descend upon us, your priests, and the whole clergy. To you we look as waymarks for our direction."

He pressed, also, that greater care should be taken in admitting persons to holy orders, "for here is the source whence other evils flow. Hence proceed and emanate those hosts of both unlearned and wicked priests which are in the church. For it is not enough, in my judgment, that a priest can construe a collect, propound a proposition, or reply to a sophism, but much more needful are a good and pure and holy life, approved morals, moderate knowledge of the Scriptures, some knowledge of the sacraments—above all, fear of God and love of the heavenly life."

It was a bold thing before such an assembly, composed of the leading ecclesiastics of England, to say, "Let the laws be recited which direct that ecclesiastical benefices should be conferred on the worthy, and promotions in the church made with just regard to merit, not by carnal affection, whereby it comes to pass in these days that boys instead of old men, fools instead of wise men, wicked instead of good men, reign and rule. Let the laws be recited against the guilt of simony, which plague, which contagion, which dire pestilence now creeps like a cancer through the minds of priests, so that most"—this was a tremendous assertion—"are not ashamed in these days to get for themselves great dignities by petitions and suits at court, by rewards and promises." He attacked also, in plain, unvarnished

language, the crying evil of non-residence. "For many evils," he assured his audience, "spring from the custom in these days of performing all clerical duties by help of vicars and substitutes, men, too, without judgment, unfit and often wicked, who will seek nothing from the people but sordid gain—whence spring scandals, heresies, and bad Christianity amongst the people. Let the laws and the holy rules handed down from our ancestors," he went on to say, be recited, "which prohibit any churchman from being a merchant, usurer, or hunter, or common player, or from bearing arms; the laws which prohibit the clergy from frequenting taverns, which command morality, sobriety and modesty, and temperance in dress."

Among many other grave recommendations in this stern sermon of rebuke, which tells us so much of the sad falling away in life and practice among the bishops and clergy of the church, he urged also that the laws be recited which command that the goods of the church be spent, not in sumptuous buildings, not in magnificence and pomp, not in feasts, not in luxury and lust, not in enriching kinsfolk, nor in keeping hounds, but in things useful and needful to the church. Provincial councils, he considered, should be held more frequently. Then, turning to the prelates, with great force he urged that these reforms in life and practice should begin with them, "so that by your living example you may teach us priests to imitate you. . . . And we, seeing our fathers keep the laws, will gladly follow in the footsteps of our fathers."

In the peroration of this remarkable sermon before Convocation, in praying his great audience to pardon the preacher if he should seem to have gone too far, he concluded with the weighty words: "Forgive it me, and pardon a man speaking out of zeal, a man sorrowing for the ruin of the church. . . . Consider, fathers, the miserable state and condition of the church, and bend your whole minds to its reformation. Suffer not this so illustrious an assembly to break up without result. Go now in the Spirit whom ye have invoked, that ye may be able with his assistance to devise, to ordain, and to decree those things which may be useful to the church."

This tremendous and public piece of accusation was printed and distributed in Latin, and most probably in English. But Colet was henceforth a marked man. The words raised up a storm of enmity against the speaker, a storm which, as far as Colet was concerned, was never lulled.

A curious and telling commentary on the gross superstition of these times, and how perverted was the authoritative teaching of the church, and what disciples of the new school of learning, devout and saintly men like dean Colet, and profound scholars like Erasmus, were beginning to think of these unhappy perversions of truth, is contained in one of Erasmus's vivid and picturesque colloquies.

Pilgrimages, in the age immediately preceding the Reformation, were much in vogue in England among all sorts and conditions of men. Soldiers and sailors of the highest distinction would promise gifts to famous shrines like that of "our Lady at Walsingham" or of "St. Thomas at Canterbury," and when the war and peril

COLET PREACHING.

was over, would go on pilgrimage to the shrines in question to fulfil the vows they had made. A royal and illustrious personage like queen Katherine of Arragon would go as a pilgrim to such a shrine to invoke the Virgin's aid upon her husband king Henry's French campaign, and at the same shrine would return thanks for the English victory over the Scots. Erasmus tells us how, during his Cambridge residence, he paid a visit to Walsingham (A.D. 1513), somewhat in a satirical and sceptical mood, and how when there he hung up a Greek ode as a votive offering, doubting all the while the genuineness of the much-prized relics displayed there, and offered to the veneration of the many pilgrims. Erasmus gives us also a detailed account of a pilgrimage to the yet more famous Canterbury shrine of St. Thomas which he made in 1514, in company with his friend dean Colet. He relates with his customary brilliance and vivid picturing the impression left upon Colet on this occasion.

The journey to Canterbury is made on horseback; the two friends, with a letter from archbishop Warham to the authorities of the cathedral to assist them in their pilgrimage, enter the great nave of the metropolitan cathedral. There they especially take note of the "Gospel of Nicodemus," a curious, early legendary history of little historical value, affixed among other books to the columns. On the north side of the church, on a plain ancient wooden altar of the Virgin, is exhibited the point of the dagger which pierced the brain of St. Thomas at the time of the murder, and whose sacred rust pilgrims are expected devoutly to kiss. In the vault below, the martyr's skull covered with silver is shown, also the hair shirt and girdle of the saint. Other relics of saints' bones, skulls, teeth, etc., are shown, which the pilgrims were also expected to kiss. Colet, so says the account, soon showed signs of impatience, upon which the verger in attendance shuts up the strange collection of prized remains. The pilgrims were then shown the high altar with its many costly ornaments; then they were conducted into the vestry, where was preserved the staff of St. Thomas amidst many costly silken and broidered vestments and precious golden candlesticks. Thence they were taken into a chapel behind the high altar, and the face of St. Thomas was shown them set in gold and gems. Here Colet asked whether St. Thomas, when he lived, was not very kind to the poor. The verger replying in the affirmative, "Surely," said Colet, "he cannot have changed his mind. Would he not," he asks, "be pleased, now that he is dead, that these riches of his should be disposed of to lighten the poor men's burden of poverty, than that they should be hoarded up here?" The cathedral attendant looks astonished at these bold criticisms, but is appeased by a few kind words and some small coins from Erasmus, remembering too that these eccentric pilgrims had come with letters of introduction from the archbishop.

The pilgrims' circuit goes on. At length a chest is opened containing the holy rags on which the saint of Canterbury was accustomed when in life to wipe the sweat from off his brow. Here the prior, who had joined the little company, aware of the position and dignity of Colet, the famous

preacher and dean of St. Paul's, offers him as a costly present one of the little precious rags. Colet takes up the rag, looks at it with a somewhat disdainful chuckle, and then lays it down again in evident disgust. The prior will not notice the strange profanity of the distinguished pilgrim, but abruptly closes his relic-chest, and invites them to partake of some refreshment.

Then the two friends mount their horses and prepare to ride back to London. As they journeyed, near Canterbury, an old mendicant monk comes out of a house, and, sprinkling Colet with holy water, offers him the upper leather of an old shoe to kiss. Colet asks what he wants. The old mendicant replies that the relic thus offered him for veneration was a piece of St. Thomas's shoe; on which, passionately turning to Erasmus, he exclaims, "Do these fools wish us to kiss the shoes of every good man? They pick out the filthiest things they can find, and ask us to kiss them!" Erasmus, to pacify the old mendicant, gives him a coin, and the pilgrims pass on. Then they proceed to discuss what they had seen and heard, and how such abuses carried on in the name of religion were to be remedied. Colet was most indignant, but Erasmus argues that a rough and sudden remedy might have a worse effect upon men's mind than even the disease. These gross superstitions must be tolerated until an opportunity arises of correcting them without disorder.

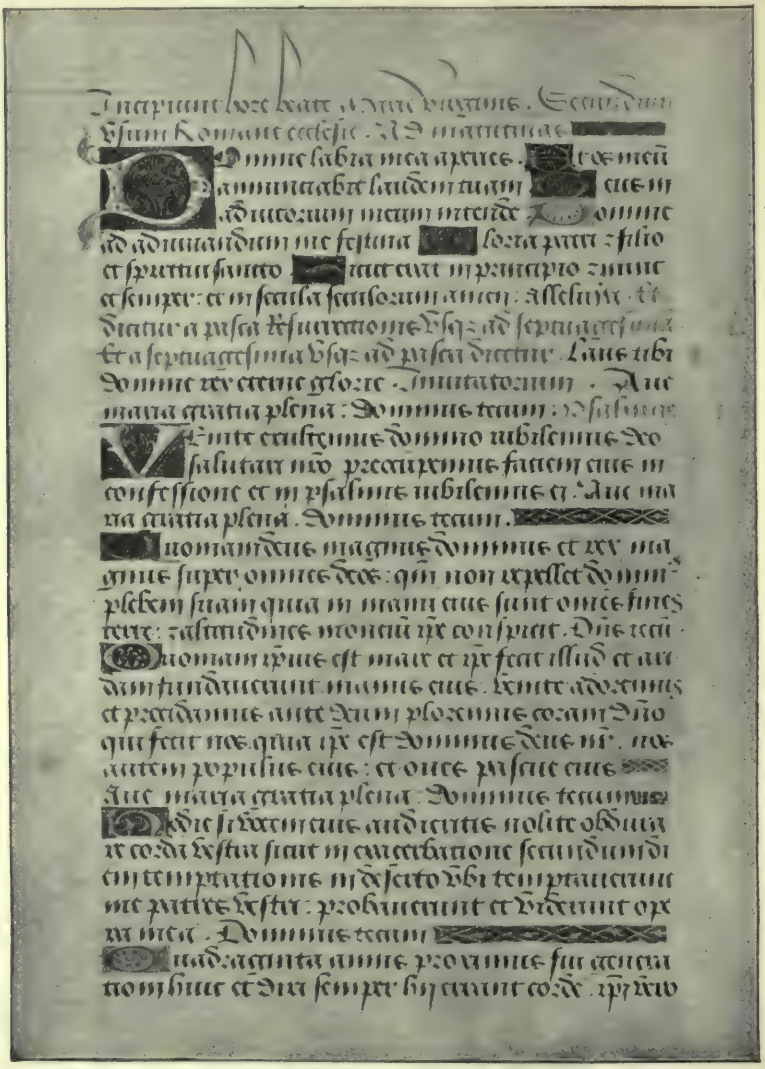
"Little did the two friends dream," writes the biographer of Colet, "as they rode back to town debating these questions, how soon they would find a final solution. . . . Little did they dream that in another five-and-twenty years the far-famed image of the Virgin of Walsingham would be dragged to Chelsea by royal order, there to be publicly burned; that in five-and-twenty years St. Thomas's bones would share the fiery fate of the image of "our Lady of Walsingham," and that the gold and jewellery of St. Thomas's Canterbury shrine would be carried off in chests upon the shoulders of eight stout men, and cast without remorse into the royal exchequer."* The early reformers, indeed, little guessed the terrible and destructive storm which was so shortly to arise in peaceful, quiet England.

Besides the disastrous influence upon popular religion of the old traditional shrines, and the undefined importance attached to pilgrimage to and veneration of the special image or relic which constituted the glory of the shrine, there was a grievous and ever-increasing amount of false teaching throughout England, in these early years of the Reformation century. Mariolatry, for instance, quite unknown in the early ages of Christianity, threatened positively to supersede all definite Christian teaching. How deeply this strange and saddest of human errors affected such a mind as Sir Thomas More's, will be seen from the following extract from one of his letters, written about 1517—the exact date is uncertain. More, it will be remembered, with all his splendid accomplishments, his profound learning, and fervid earnestness, was, though the dear friend of men like Colet and Erasmus, in a manner different from them, one who revered the past, and opposed, as we know, to death, any destructive reformation,

* Seebohm: "The Oxford Reformers—Colet, More, and Erasmus."

any rough sweeping away the old landmarks of mediæval faith and practice. His words, therefore, of stern condemnation on when we remember the circumstances of his death.

Coventry at this time was a celebrated



PAGE OF A MS. OF OFFICES OF THE VIRGIN, WRITTEN LATE IN THE 15TH CENTURY. (*British Museum.*)

such a point of sixteenth-century popular theological teaching have a special weight, and stand out with a special impressiveness

home of religious establishments. It possessed a famous Benedictine monastery and a noble church attached to it. The

Franciscans and the Carmelites had each their separate houses and churches. The stern and ascetic rule of the Carthusians had also chosen Coventry as one of their English centres. Just at this juncture a Franciscan monk at Coventry put out the strange doctrine from his pulpit, "that whoever should daily pray through the psalter of the Blessed Virgin could never be damned." The teaching was readily accepted, and became popular. Not a few, trusting in the friar's doctrine, were sedulous in their devotion to the Virgin's psalter, but at the same time grew more lax in their way of life. The secular pastor of the city, when he advised the people not to be led astray by this strange preposterous teaching, was publicly hissed, and denounced as an enemy of the Virgin.

"When this curious frenzy was at its height," says More, "I chanced to visit a sister of mine resident in Coventry. Scarcely had I alighted from my horse, when the question was put to me, 'Was the friar's teaching true?' I laughed at the question as positively absurd. I was told my attitude was a dangerous one." Very soon More met the friar who was preaching this monstrous doctrine; he at once began to dispute the question with me. "I spoke what I thought, but in few words." The friar replied at great length, drawing all his arguments from miracles, which he took from the "Marial" and other like books. More then replied. In all the long discourse the friar had said nothing to convince those who perchance did not admit the truth of the miracles he had recited, and *this*, he added, *might well be, and a man's faith in Christ be firm notwithstanding.* And even, More conceded, if these were mostly true, they proved nothing of any moment, for, though you might easily find a prince who would concede something to his enemies at the entreaty of his mother, yet never was there one so foolish as to publish a law which should provoke daring against him by the promise of impunity to all traitors who should perform certain offices to his mother. Eventually More found the friar was lauded to the skies, while he was laughed at as a fool.

In good truth, things were going badly in the ecclesiastical world—badly in practice as in matters of faith. Novel or comparatively novel doctrines were being piled upon the old truths, and were successfully obscuring them; idle superstitions were taking the place of holy faith. The usurpations and ever-growing claims of Rome were crushing all real life out of the churches of England and France, Germany and Spain; and, worse perhaps than all, a sad deterioration in life and conversation was too visible among many of the vowed servants of the church. But all this might have gone on; this state of things might have been indefinitely prolonged; the church might have grown better or grown worse, had it not been for the sudden and momentous changes already indicated which passed over the world, as the din and confusion of the terrible Wars of the Roses in England began to be forgotten.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE NEW LEARNING. DEAN COLET AND SIR THOMAS MORE.

Renaissance of Greek Literature due to the Fall of Constantinople—Grocyn of Oxford—John Colet—His Lectures on St. Paul—Sketch and Biography by Erasmus—Colet's Testimony against Current Errors—Supported by the King—Work as an Expositor and Preacher—As an Educational Reformer—His Foundation of St. Paul's—His Death—Early Life of Sir Thomas More—Sketch by Erasmus—Their Intimacy—Close Connection with Henry VIII.—The "Utopia"—More becomes Chancellor—Recoils from the King's Reformation Measures—His Resignation—Charge of Treason—Refuses to acknowledge Henry as Head of the Church—Trial and Condemnation of More—Scenes at his Execution.

CHANGES both vast and various were indeed passing over the whole civilised world during the dawn of modern history. All of a sudden, the limits of the world known to the ancient civilisations of Egypt, Greece and Rome, known to Saracen and Northman, known to the mediæval kingdoms, were enormously enlarged. Columbus, in his marvellous voyage across the pathless ocean no mariner had ever sailed before, discovered the New World, with all its undreamed-of possibilities. It was a revelation which at once bore fruit, opening as it did almost limitless fields to human industry and hope; while the fall of Constantinople and the arrival of a crowd of homeless Greek-speaking exiles with their rolls of yellow and discoloured manuscripts, provided a rich material for the new invention of the printing-press to work at.* Thus to western Europe was restored, in an incredibly short space of time, the matchless literature of a forgotten world.

* The dates of these events are roughly as follow: the effects of them, of course, must be placed some years later. *Fall of Constantinople*, 1453; *Caxton* set up his printing press at Westminster, 1471; *Columbus* discovered the continent of America, 1497.

The cities of Italy were the natural cities of refuge for these homeless exiles of the fallen Greek empire. Not only were they nearest at hand, but their repute as immemorial centres of learning would attract the wandering scholar and student. Among these famous homes of literature and of art, Florence in the fifteenth century was pre-eminent, and the beautiful city by the Arno became quickly the resort of foreign scholars, eager to share in the revival of the long-buried language and literature of Greece. Among the students from distant countries who came to Florence in search of the new learning, was one Grocyn, a fellow of New College, Oxford. This Grocyn, when his studies in Florence were completed, returned to Oxford, and became the teacher of Greek to the many English youths who sought their training in the famous English university. These lectures of Grocyn, which inaugurated a new era among English scholars, are usually dated from 1491, when Henry VII. was at the height of his power, and Cardinal Morton, the archbishop of Canterbury, was his chancellor and chief minister. It is noticeable, that while in Florence and other towns in Italy, in this revival or Renaissance of Greek literature the Pagan classics

attracted the deepest interest, in Oxford, and a little later in Cambridge, the Greek Testament and its newly-recovered original text became the object of absorbing interest to English scholars.

Among these English scholars, who studied Greek in Italy and then at Oxford, John Colet, known afterwards as the famous dean of St. Paul's, stands pre-eminent. His Oxford lectures, delivered at the close of the fifteenth century—lectures especially devoted to the exposition of the Pauline Epistles—came as if it were a revelation to the students of theology. Clinging fast to the plain grammatical sense of the text, the eloquent and fervid scholar swept away the strange and curious explanations, partly mystical, partly allegorical, with which generations of schoolmen had obscured the plain and obvious meaning of so many of the passages. "In the life and sayings of its Founder he found a simple and rational Christianity whose finest expression was the Apostles' Creed. About the rest he said with characteristic impatience, 'Let divines dispute as they will.' " *

Of this remarkable pioneer-reformer, "Erasmus has left us a portrait in words as exquisite as Holbein's drawing of him. He stands out before us as fresh in Erasmus' story as if we saw and heard him ourselves." † "Colet was born in London A.D. 1466. His father was twice lord mayor. He was the eldest of twenty-two children, of whom he was the only survivor, tall in stature and well-looking in face. In youth he studied scholastic theology, then read Cicero and Plato, and made himself a first-rate mathematician. He went abroad, travelled in France and Italy, kept up his Scotus and Aquinas, but worked besides at the early Christian fathers, while Dante and Petrarch polished his language. Returning to England, he left London, settled at Oxford, and lectured on St. Paul. It was then my (Erasmus') acquaintance with him began, he being then thirty (this was about 1496)—I two or three months his junior. He had no theological degree, but all the university doctors went to hear him. Henry VII. took note of him, and made him dean of St. Paul's. His first step was to restore discipline in the chapter, which had all gone to wreck. He preached every saint's day to great crowds. He cut down the household expenses (of the chapter) and abolished suppers and evening parties. At dinner a boy reads a chapter from Scripture. Colet takes a passage from it, and discourses to the universal delight. Conversation is his chief pleasure, and he will keep it up till midnight if he finds a companion. Me he has often taken with him in his walks, and talks all the time of Christ. He hates coarse language; furniture, dress, food, books are all clean and tidy, but scrupulously plain, and he wears grey woollen when priests generally go in purple. With the large fortune which he inherited from his father, he founded and endowed a school at St. Paul's entirely at his own cost, masters' houses, salaries, everything.

"He was a man of genuine piety. He was not born with it. He was naturally hot, impetuous, resentful, indolent, fond of pleasure and of women's society, disposed to make a joke of everything. He told me

* Green: "History of the English People."

† Mr. Froude, whose version of Erasmus' pictures of Colet and More we have here slightly abbreviated.

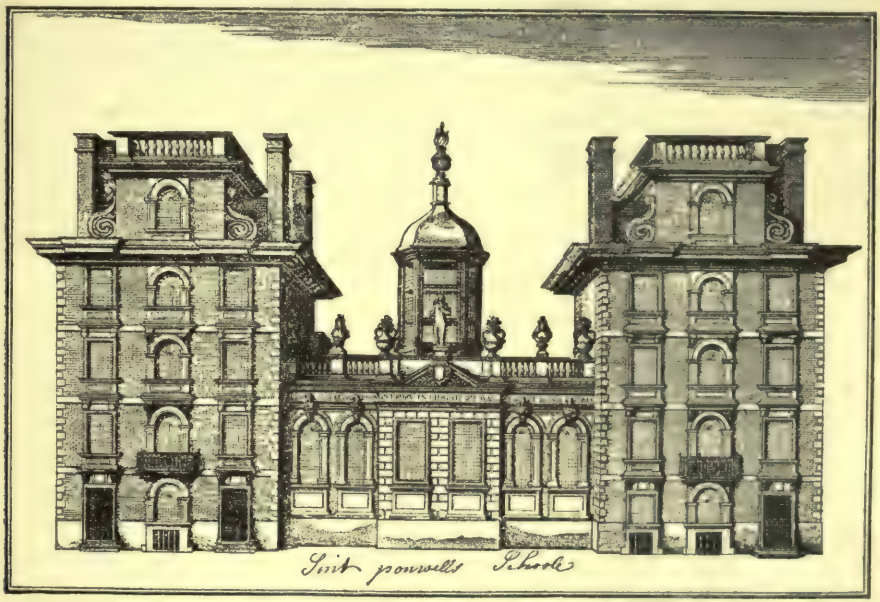
that he had fought against his faults with study, fasting, and prayer; and thus his whole life was, in fact, unpolluted with the world's defilements. His money he gave to pious uses, he worked incessantly, talked always on serious subjects to conquer his disposition to levity—not but what you could see traces of the old Adam when wit was flying at feast or festival. He avoided large parties for this reason. He dined on a single dish, with a draught or two of light ale. He liked good wine, but abstained on principle. I never knew a man of sunnier nature. No one ever more enjoyed cultivated society; but here, too, he denied himself, and was always thinking of the life to come.

"His opinions were peculiar, and he was reserved in expressing them, for fear of exciting suspicion. He knew how unfairly men judge each other, how credulous they are of evil, how much easier it is for a lying tongue to stain a reputation than for a friend to clear it. But among his friends he spoke his mind freely. He thought the Scotists [a well-known party among the schoolmen], who are considered so clever, were stupid blockheads. He regarded their word-splitting, their minute subdividings, as signs of a starved intellect. He hated Thomas Aquinas [one of the greatest of the schoolmen] even more than Scotus. I once praised the 'Catena Aurea' to him. He was silent. I repeated my words. He glanced at me to see if I was serious, and when he saw that I meant it, he became really angry. Aquinas, he said, would not have laid down the law so boldly on all things in heaven and earth if he had not been an arrogant fool, and he would not have contaminated Christianity with his preposterous philosophy if he had not been a worldling at heart. He did not make light of impurity, but he thought it less criminal than spite and malice, and envy, and vanity and ignorance.

"He had a peculiar dislike of bishops. He said they were more like wolves than shepherds. They sold the sacraments—sold their ceremonies and absolutions. They were slaves of vanity and avarice. He disapproved of the great educational institutions in England. He thought they encouraged idleness. As little did he like the public schools. Education was spoilt, he said, when the lessons learnt were turned to worldly account, and made the means of getting on. Such laborious wisdom, he said, was fatal to sound knowledge and right feeling. He approved of a fine ritual at church, but he saw no reason why priests should be always muttering prayers at home or on their walks. He admitted privately that many things were generally taught which he did not believe, but he would not create scandal by blurting out his objections."

Erasmus went on to say that this bishop-hating dean was not unnaturally disliked by Fitzjames, the aged bishop of London—he was past eighty—who did his best to discredit Colet with the young king Henry VIII., then only about twenty-one, but who was already famous among the European sovereigns. "I will speak no harm of the bishop of London, except that he was a superstitious and malignant schoolman. I have known other bishops like him. I must not call them wicked, but I would not call them Christians either." The accusations urged against dean Colet were curious. Besides introducing a

severer and simpler rule into the chapter life at St. Paul's among the greater and lesser officials, he had, among other things, said in a sermon it was wrong to worship images; he had denied that the command in the Gospel to feed the sheep was specially addressed to Peter. But it was of no avail; the king liked Colet, and this honoured work by Erasmus, Luther, and a number of other less known scholars. In his own day he was perhaps best known for his great pulpit powers. As dean of St. Paul's he became the great preacher of England. But the real life-work of Colet, in which he stands pre-eminent, was his work of educational reform. His own



OLD ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL.
(*From an old print.*)

admired his learning and brilliance, while he respected his grave simple life, telling him that he approved heartily of his words and works. "Let every man," the king was reported to have said, "choose his own doctor; dean Colet shall be mine."

Colet ranks among the three or four who prepared the way for the Reformation in England. He was the first of the new school of *expositors of the New Testament*, the school which, as has been said, began a new era in theology. He was followed in foundation of St. Paul's school, built and maintained out of the ample fortune he inherited from his father, though the old site under the shadow of the metropolitan cathedral has been exchanged for a quieter and more reposeful habitation, is still with us, one of the great schools of England.

Colet's school of St. Paul's was far more than a solitary educational foundation. It gave the impulse to the many noble grammar-schools founded in different parts of England by Edward VI. and Elizabeth.

To the great dean may be ascribed that system of middle-class education, which before the close of Elizabeth's reign had accomplished such far-reaching results for our country. Colet's important foundation set the example, which was quickly followed in the many schools that sprang up; and the new study of Greek and its splendid literature became a regular part of middle-class education. Fresh grammars, composed by Erasmus and other scholars, were introduced into the school of St. Paul's, and Lilly, an Oxford scholar who had studied Greek in the East, became the head-master. The deep religiousness of Colet came out in the scanty efforts to adorn the schoolroom of his foundation, where an image of the child Jesus over the master's chair, with the words "Hear ye him" carved beneath it, reminded the teachers and scholars of the Redeemer, whose pure worship their founder and his friends longed to restore to England.

The tender love of this great precursor of the Reformation for children, was the characteristic feature of his character. Erasmus tells us he would often remind his guests and inner circle of friends, how that Christ had made children the example for men, and ever and again he would compare the little ones to the angels above. In his preface to the Latin grammar which he wrote for his school of St. Paul's, there are some touching sentences, which bring out this absorbing passion of the stern reformer. The impassioned preacher, the vehement and indignant rebuker of the vices and soul-degrading superstitions of his day, when he thought of his dear children, would forget for a season his message of stern censure, would put aside his sorrow for and anger with the corruptions of doctrine and practice, which he felt acutely were poisoning all real religious life in England. Trying to make study easy to the boys of his school, he wrote thus of the divisions of his grammar: "I have made them a little more easy to young wits than methinks they were before, judging that nothing may be too soft nor too familiar for little children, especially learning a tongue unto them all strange, in which little book I have left many things out of purpose, considering the tenderness and small capacity of little minds. I pray God all may be to His honour, and to the erudition and profit of children, my countrymen, Londoners especially, whom I had always before my eyes. . . . Wherefore I pray you all, little children, learn gladly this little treatise, trusting of this beginning that you shall proceed and grow to perfect literature, and come at last to be *great clerks*. *And lift up your little white hands for me*, which prayeth to God for you."

When Colet in early life studied in Italy, it is certain that he came under the influence, if not of Savonarola himself, certainly under that of the great Florentine reformer's disciples, and that the fire of religious zeal, kindled by the saintly and fervid prior of San Marco, touched the heart of the young English scholar. Not a little of the work and words of Colet in after-days were evidently a memory of what he had heard in Italy, from the lips of the men who had caught something of the inspiration of that truest saint and martyr, the illustrious Savonarola.

As life went on, this quiet toiler for God, who in his day, amidst many foes, did so

much to awaken men's minds to the sad position into which religion, faith as well as practice, had unhappily sunk, seemed to draw nearer and ever nearer the mind of Jesus. "O Erasmus," he wrote to his life-long friend some two years before his death, "of books and of knowledge there is no end. There is nothing better for us in this short life than to live holily and purely, and to make it our daily care to be purified and enlightened, . . . but in my opinion there is no other way for us to attain this than by the earnest love and imitation of Jesus. Wherefore, leaving these wandering paths, let us go the short way to work. I long to the best of my ability to do so. Farewell.—*From London*, A.D. 1517."

The dean died in 1519. Erasmus was working hard at Louvain in Belgium, when the news reached him that Colet was dead. When the great scholar and unwearied worker heard of it, he could not refrain from weeping. "For thirty years," he wrote to a mutual friend, "I have not felt a death so deeply." Writing to another correspondent, he said, "I seem as though only half of me were alive, Colet being dead. What a man has England, and what a friend have I lost!" To another Englishman he wrote: "What avail these sobs and lamentations? They cannot bring him back again. In a little while we shall follow him. In the meantime we should rejoice for Colet. He now is safely enjoying Christ, whom he always had upon his lips and in his heart." To bishop Fisher, Erasmus wrote: "I have written this, weeping for Colet's death. I know it is all right with him. I cannot help mourning in the public name the loss of so rare an example of Christian piety, so remarkable a preacher of Christian truth."

In another of Erasmus's letters written at this time he thus speaks of his dead friend: "O true theologian! O wonderful preacher of evangelical doctrine! With what earnest zeal did he drink in the philosophy of Christ! How eagerly did he imbibe the spirit and feelings of St. Paul! How did the purity of his whole life correspond to his heavenly doctrine! How many years, following the example of St. Paul, did he teach the people without reward!"

"For generations," wrote Sir Thomas More, "we have not had amongst us any one man more learned and holy."

Colet was laid in his cathedral of St. Paul's in a tomb prepared by himself, and on a leaden plate fixed on his coffin was an inscription which spoke of the grief of the whole people, by whom, for his integrity of life and divine gift of preaching, he was the most beloved of all his time.

There was another of the little group of pre-Reformation giants with whom Erasmus, whose sketch of Colet we have just quoted, was on terms of the most intimate friendship; one far greater and more renowned even than Colet, one whose praise is and ever will be in all the churches. The stern Protestant, who could see no beauty in anything, however venerable and revered, which the corrupt church of his fathers had loved and cherished; the bigoted Romanist, whose eyes were blinded and ears dulled to all the sights and sounds with which a fatal soul-destroying superstition had overlaid Catholic doctrine and

practice; the gay pleasure-loving courtier of Henry VIII.; the ascetic scholar; such different personalities as the emperor and the Pope, Erasmus and Thomas Cromwell —all loved and admired Sir Thomas More, and grieved with a true mourning when that honoured head, in the first wild blast of the Reformation, fell on Tower Hill.

The future chancellor and somewhiles chief minister of king Henry VIII., the scholar and philosopher, the brilliant writer and the eloquent statesman, was first heard of in the household of cardinal Morton, the well-known minister of Henry VII. Morton predicted his future greatness. It was at Oxford that he became associated with Colet and Erasmus. Nor is it too much to assume that to the life-long friendship with More, Erasmus owed that new spirit which gradually passed over his character, which changed the wayward, impulsive, vagrant student into the first of European scholars, the friend and trusted counsellor of well-nigh every great one in Europe.

"Young as he was, More no sooner quitted the university than he was known throughout Europe as one of the foremost figures in the new movement. The keen irregular face, the grey restless eyes, the thin mobile lips, the tumbled brown hair, the careless gait and dress, as they remain stamped upon the canvas of Holbein, picture the inner soul of the man: his vivacity, his restless, all-devouring intellect, his keen and ever reckless wit, the kindly, half-sad humour that drew its strange veil of laughter and tears over the deep tender reverence of the soul within. In a higher because in a sweeter and more lovable form than Colet, More is the representative of the religious tendency of the new learning in England."*

No one among the thought-leaders of that period was more convinced than More of the worldliness and fearful corruption of the church, and that unless a complete and thorough alteration took place soon, a terrible catastrophe was at hand. For the superstitions of the day, which so disfigured Catholicism, he had an utter contempt. In his "Utopia," the most important of his works, there breaks out a spirit which condemned the sacerdotal assumptions of the pre-Reformation age in terms so scathing, that he appeared to have anticipated the more advanced thoughts of the foreign reformers. "Christianity had reached his ideal realm of Utopia, but it had few priests; religion found its centre rather in the family than in the congregation, and each household confessed its errors and sins to its own natural head." And yet with all this freedom of thought, More was an intense believer in the cardinal Christian verities—so firm a believer, for instance, in the future life, as to surprise his dearest friend, Erasmus. It was with memories drawn from the New Testament that he accepted the condemnation of his judges in the concluding scene in the court-house; it was with the cross in his hands that he knelt calmly down on the scaffold, and devoutly repeated the beautiful and touching *miserere* psalm. His austerities were severe, but were carefully concealed—for God's eyes, not for man's—and his last gifts to his best loved child were the rough hair shirt he used to wear, and the scourge he was wont to use. He sent these strange memorials of his inner

* Green: "History of the English People."

life to Margaret Roper, when, as he said, he had no more use for these things.*

Erasmus has left us a beautiful picture of his friend, to whom he owed so much—a kind of companion sketch to the one we have already given by the same hand of Colet, dean of St. Paul's. It is so lifelike, so natural, so free from all exaggeration, that we reproduce it in the great scholar's own words. It occurs in a long letter written to Ulrich von Hutten, who wished to know something personal concerning this Englishman, More, whose name was on all lips. Von Hutten was another, but one less generally known, of that brilliant band of men of genius and of learning whom we have termed pioneers of the Reformation;

SIR THOMAS MORE.
(*From the painting by Holbein.*)

* Froude: "Hist. of England," chap. ix.

but, alas! Ulrich von Hutten, with all his sparkling wit and profound learning, has left behind him a name and a moral reputation sadly inferior to that of Colet, More, and Erasmus.

"The task of describing this Englishman," wrote Erasmus to Von Hutten, "is hard; for not everyone understands More, who is as difficult a subject as Alexander or Achilles. He is of middle height, well shaped, complexion pale without a touch of colour in it, save when the skin flushes. The hair is black, shot with yellow, or yellow shot with black; beard scanty, eyes grey with dark spots, an eye supposed in England to indicate genius, and is never found save in remarkable men. The expression is pleasant and cordial, easily passing into a smile, for he has the quickest sense of the ridiculous of any man I ever met; the only sign of rusticity is in the hands, which are slightly coarse. From childhood he has been careless of appearance, but he has still the charm which I remember when I first knew him. His health is good, though not robust, and he is likely to be long-lived." [O the pity of it, Erasmus was no prophet here!] "He is careless in what he eats; I never saw a man more so. Like his father, who, though in extreme old age, is still vigorous, he is a water-drinker. His food is beef, fresh or salt, bread with fruit, and especially eggs. His voice is low and unmusical, though he loves music, but it is clear and penetrating. He articulates slowly and distinctly, and never hesitates.

"He dresses plainly—no silks, velvets, or gold chains. He has no concern for ceremony, expects none from others, and shows little himself. He holds forms and courtesies unworthy of a man of sense, and for that reason has hitherto kept clear of the court. All courts are full of intrigue; there is less of it in England than elsewhere, for there are no affectations in the king, but More loves freedom and likes to have his time to himself. He is a true friend. When he finds a man to be of the wrong sort, he lets him drop, but he enjoys nothing so much as the society of those that suit him." (The friendship of More and Erasmus only ended with the death of More.) "Gambling of all kinds, balls, dice, and such like, he detests. None of that sort are to be found about him. In short, he is the best type of companion.

"His talk is charming, full of fun, but never scurrilous or malicious. He used to act plays when young; wit delights him though at his own expense. He set me on my 'Encomium Moriæ.'" ["The praise of folly"—the title is a play on More's name. This brilliant satire was one of Erasmus's comparatively early works, and had an enormous circulation all over Europe.] "He is wise with the wise, and jests with fools, with women especially, and his wife among them. He is fond of animals of all sorts, and loves to watch their habits. All the birds of Chelsea come to him to be fed. He has a menagerie of tame beasts—a monkey, a fox, a ferret, a weasel. He buys any singular thing which is brought him. His house is a magazine of curiosities which he delights in showing off.

"He had his love affairs when young, but none that compromised him. He was entertained by the girls running after him. He studied hard at that time at Greek and at philosophy. His father wanted him to work at English law, but

he did not like it. The law in England is the high road to fame and fortune, and many peerages have risen out of that profession. But they say it requires years of labour. More had no taste that way, Nature having designed him for better things. Nevertheless, after drinking deep in literature, he did make himself a lawyer —and an excellent one. No opinion is sought more eagerly than his, or more highly paid for.

"He worked at divinity besides, and lectured to large audiences on Augustine's 'City of God.' Priests and old men were not ashamed at learning from him. His original wish was to be a priest himself. He prepared for it with fast and prayer and vigil, unlike most who rush into ordination without preparation of any kind. He gave it up because he fell in love. The wife that he chose was a very young lady, well connected but wholly uneducated, who had been brought up in the country with her parents. Thus he was able to shape her character after his own pattern. He taught her books, he taught her music, and formed her into a companion for his life. They had several children—Margaret [his favourite, to whom he left the hair shirt and scourge], Cecilia, and Louisa, who are still with him, and one son, John. Unhappily his wife was taken from him before her time. He controls his family with an easy hand—no tragedies, no quarrels. He has never made an enemy or become an enemy. His whole house breathes happiness, and no one enters it who is not better for the visit.

"He is indifferent to money. He sets apart so much of his income as will make a future provision for his family; the rest he spends or gives away. It is large, and arises from his profession as an advocate, but he always advises his clients for the best, and recommends them to settle their disputes out of court. For a time he was a judge in civil cases. The work was not severe, but the position was honourable. No judge finished off more causes, or was more upright, and he often remitted the fees. He was exceedingly liked in the city. He was satisfied, and had no higher ambition.

"Eventually he was forced upon a foreign mission, and conducted himself so well that the king would not afterwards part with him, and dragged him into the circle of the court. 'Dragged' is the word, for no one ever struggled harder to gain admission there than More struggled to escape. But the king was bent on surrounding himself with the most capable men in his realm. He insisted that More should make one of them, and now he values him so highly, both as a companion and as a privy councillor, that he will scarcely let him out of his sight. [Only a few years later this same king cut off his head. More at the time of his death was considered the most gifted man in Europe.]

"More has been never known to accept a present. Happy the commonwealth when the magistrates are of such material! Elevation has not elated him, or made him forget his humble friends, and he returns whenever he can to his beloved books. He is always kind, always generous. Some he helps with money, some with influence. When he can give nothing, he gives advice. He is patron-general to all poor devils.

"The history of his connection with me [Erasmus] was thus:—In his early life he

was a versifier, and he came to me to improve his style. Since that time he has written a good deal. [Here Erasmus enumerates his principal works, dwelling especially on the "Utopia."]

"He has a fine intellect and an excellent memory, information all arranged and pigeon-holed to be ready for use. He is so ready in argument that he can puzzle the best divines on their own subjects. Colet, a good judge on such points, says More has more genius than any man in England.

"He is religious, but without superstition. He has his hours for prayer, but he uses no forms, and prays out of his heart. He will talk with his friends about a life to come, and you can see that he means it and has real hopes. Such is More, and More is an English courtier, and people fancy that no Christians are to be found outside monasteries!

"The king not only admits such men into his court, but he invites them—forces them—that they may be in a position to watch all that he does and share his duties and his pleasures. He prefers the companionship of men like More to that of silly youths or girls [this was written before the days of Anne Boleyn], or the rich or the dishonest, who might tempt him to foolish indulgences or injurious courses. If you were here in England, my dear Hutten, you would leave off abusing courts. A galaxy of distinguished men now surrounds the English throne."

The subject of this beautiful picture, says the latest biographer of its writer (Erasmus), had built himself a house at Chelsea on the Thames. It was of moderate and unpretentious dimensions, with a garden leading down to the river. "The life there, Erasmus tells us, was like the life in Plato's Academy, and Erasmus was a permanent guest whenever he was in London. No two men ever suited each other better, their intellectual differences only serving to give interest to their conversations as they strolled together and talked of things human and divine by the silver river." *

We will briefly trace More's career to its tragic close, of course thus anticipating much that has to be told in more detail. His close friendship with king Henry VIII. lasted nearly twenty years. It commenced early in the reign, when Henry was only on the threshold of manhood, and it only cooled when the sinister and perplexed issues of the divorce began to influence and to cloud the hitherto clear and statesmanlike policy of the English king. Very unwillingly, the scholar and lawyer was persuaded to enter into political life again; his experience of it, when still comparatively a young man, in Henry VII.'s reign, had been unfortunate, and he thoroughly disliked it. But Henry VIII. desired so earnestly his friendship and counsel, that More yielded. The story is told how the two friends, the king and the scholar, were wont to pace the palace leads at night, and discourse together of the high and holy things, of which More could speak with a charm peculiarly his own. His life for many years was a busy one; his friendship with the king cost him much time and thought, as he was the trusted counsellor in many a weighty state affair. He had little time to spare for

* Mr. Froude.

moste drade & moste dere soueryn lord. I beseche the blessid trinite
preserue yo^r moost noble grace both in body & soule, and all
that are yo^r well willers, and auenge all the contrary. amongis
whome if ever I be one then feare I god that he may with
myn vpon shame & destruction declare it. At my pore house
in chelchith the fifteth day of marche by the hande unto fore
of

yo^r moste humble & moste faithfull subiaytor & bedesman

Tho. More. Eq.

To the kinges most noble grace. in the Tower time

Hit may lyke yo^r highnes to call to yo^r gracious remembrance that at
such tyme as of that great weighty rome & charge of your counsell
wherwith yo^r highnes so far aboue my merites or qualities able & more therfore
yo^r highnes had & yo^r incomparable goodnes honoured & exalted me)
ye were so good & gracious vnto me ab at my pore humble suit
to discharge & discorden me; geuing me licence with yo^r gracious
fauo^r; to retire the residue of my life in myn age vnto to serue almyghti
the prediction for my soule in the pardon of god & to be yo^r graciouse
bedisman & pray for you, it pleased yo^r highnes further to graunt vnto
me, that for the seruice which I before that time had done vnto (which it then
pleased yo^r goodnes for aboue my deserting to remember) that in any suit
that I should after make vnto yo^r highnes which other should moderate
myn fond (that word it lyked yo^r highnes to vse vnto me) or that
I should require vnto yo^r highnes which might seme to my profit I should find yo^r highnes good
& gracious lord vnto me. So is it now gracious soueryn
that worldly sorow & the thing wherof I haue resigned both the
possession & the desire in the resignation of yo^r most honorable
office. And worldes profit I trust sufficiently prouided. & therfor more
& more shall proue that I vnder was very glad therein. some vnto
yo^r my most humble suit vnto yo^r excellent highnes namely to
respecte the same some what to wardes my pore honestie but principally
that of yo^r accustomed goodnes no simistre information vnder
noble grace, to haue any more displesure of my vanity towards
& deuotion toward you then I haue or that during my life shall
the cause. Ffor in the mater of the nobles woman & conuersacion
I haue vnto yo^r trusty counseylour & faithfull Cromwell & my

that beautiful and ever absorbing home life he loved so well, of which we have such fair and attractive records. His work, too, was unremitting with and among the scholars of the new learning and the new teaching, who were preparing the way, as More and his fellow-toilers hoped and believed, for a quiet but thorough reformation in the church—for a reformation that should weed out the many tares without injuring the great corn harvest, which in the eyes of men like More, in spite of the tares, promised so much.

All this, these varied duties and occupations, this great position in the state, in the worlds of religion and letters, did not hinder More from writing. It was in 1516 (seven years after Henry VIII.'s accession) that he put out the most celebrated of his works—known and read amongst us still—the "Utopia."

He picturesquely describes the genesis of this winning and original writing. It was on one of his diplomatic missions in king Henry's service that he was in Antwerp. After hearing mass in the gorgeous church of "Our Lady," he was returning to his lodgings in the city, when he chanced to espy his friend, Peter Gilles, talking to a stranger with a black, sunburnt face, whom he judged to be a mariner. The sailor turned out to have been a companion of Amerigo Vespucci in those voyages to the New World "that be now in print and abroad in every man's hand." More took this mariner to his house, "and there in my garden, upon a bench covered with green turves, we sate down talking together." The sailor told him his tale of marvellous adventure, how he was abandoned by Amerigo, and how he wandered about over the vast unknown continent till he chanced upon the kingdom of "Nowhere," or "Utopia." A picture of this strange unknown country in the heart of that charmed land, which was then exciting, and with good reason, the heart of every adventurous youth or man in Europe, gave More an opportunity to paint an ideal society.

The book was the most remarkable outcome produced by the new learning for many a year, and was far in advance of the age—and, in fact, of a much later age—in the way it handled social problems. The picture he drew of the state of society of Utopia, was a painful contrast in the mind of the sixteenth century, to the life in the midst of which More lived. It was a great cry of pity for the poor, whom as a class More looked upon as sadly neglected and down-trodden. The questions of labour, of dwellings for the humbler classes, of treatment of crime, the problems of education, are all handled by the famous writer in his marvellous book. What he said of religion and Christianity was a gentle but unmistakable protest against the sacerdotalism of the age. But some of the opinions put forward in the "Utopia" seem to have been considerably modified, if not changed, when More at a later period was shocked by the destructive policy of the Reformation in Germany under its great teacher, Luther.

Time passed on. On the fall of Wolsey, More was induced by Henry VIII. to accept the highest office in the state—that of chancellor. It seems as though his reason for accepting the enormous responsibility which belonged to the chief minister and adviser of the king, at such a moment,

when the world was changing its old opinions, was his hope of being enabled to carry out the religious revolution in England on the lines laid down by men like Colet and Erasmus. These, and More was with them, longed to see the wild and baseless superstitions with which true religion was well-nigh hidden, swept away; in the new state of things he hoped to see, the clergy must be better educated and trained to lead nobler and more self-denying lives; the mendicant orders especially must be reformed. But the ark of the church was not to be touched lightly by profane and heedless hands, nor was its splendour to be one whit diminished. More and Erasmus saw in it a noble instrument of human training, a link between earth and heaven.

But More found the storm which was rising too violent for the course on which he hoped to pilot the ship of the state. He saw that the Reformation in England, as it had done in Germany, would lead to changes in doctrine, in ritual, and in government, of which he could not approve. Measures were brought forward in Parliament, and were sanctioned by the king, which he intensely misliked. The chancellor was powerless; he could neither stop them or even guide their inevitable tendencies; so after two years and a half's tenure of the supreme office he resigned the seals. This was in A.D. 1533. Erasmus, in one of his later letters, refers to his friend's resignation in the following terms: "Report says that More has been dismissed from office. . . . The story has flashed over Europe like lightning. I was sure it was false. I know how unwillingly the king parts with a servant whom he has trusted, even for a real fault. More's retirement was by his own wish. The chancellorship is a great office, next to the crown. The chancellor is the king's right eye and the king's right hand. More was appointed because the king loved and respected him. The cardinal of York [Wolsey], when he found he could not return himself to office, admitted that More was the fittest man to succeed him. All were pleased when he accepted the great seal; and he lays it down to the universal regret. . . . More detests the seditious doctrines with which the world is now convulsed. He makes no secret of it. He is profoundly religious, and if he inclines either way it is towards superstition." Erasmus's astonishment, mingled with loving admiration at More's intense faith, has been already noticed.

Directly after his resignation of the chancellorship, More wrote to Erasmus: "By the grace of God and the king, I am at last free, but I am not as well as I could wish. Some disease, I know not what, hangs heavily about my heart. It is not pain, it is distress and alarm at what lies before us. . . . You allow frankly that if you could have foreseen these pestilent heresies, you would have been less outspoken on certain points. Doubtless the fathers, had they expected such times as ours, would have been more cautious in their utterances. They had their own disorders to attend to, and did not think of the future. . . . The bishops and the king try to check these new doctrines, but they spread wonderfully. The people read them partly in thoughtlessness; . . . they enjoy them, not because they think them true, but because they wish them to be true."

After his resignation More lived in strict retirement in his house at Chelsea. In 1534, the following year, he was unfortunately mixed up with the treasonable impostures of the Nun of Kent, hereafter referred to,* and at one time believed her utterances to be genuine, afterwards, however, freely expressing his regret. Cromwell, who was then in power, and who admired and respected More, interceded with the king that the matter might be passed over. Henry consented, but expressed his sorrow that Sir Thomas More should have acted so unwisely. The matter ended, as far as More was concerned, but it doubtless was not forgotten when, a few months later, More ventured for conscience' sake resolutely to oppose the king's will in the matter of the oath of allegiance.

Events succeeded each other at this juncture with startling rapidity, as will be detailed in the history; but we are simply here completing the sketch of More's life and career. The breach between Henry and the Pope had come to a head, and Convocation had declared that the Pope's authority in England was abolished. Parliament passed the "Act of Succession" entailing the crown on the children of Anne Boleyn. But this Act was not confined to the question of the succession only, but "embraced other particulars of a doubtful and painful nature," dealing especially with the king's former marriage with Katherine of Arragon. An oath was to be taken by every one of the king's subjects to observe the whole contents of the Act. More was specially cited by the Royal Commission appointed to administer the oath, and was required to subscribe to it. He expressed his willingness as far as the "succession" was concerned, but to some parcels of the oath as it was framed he could not subscribe from fear of jeopardising his soul.

The end now rapidly drew on. More was committed under the charge of treason to the Tower, where he lay for many months subject to ever-increasing rigour. It is one of the saddest stories connected with the Reformation drama. That More was absolutely innocent of all treason by thought, word, or deed, is acknowledged even by the warmest apologist of Henry VIII. But he was one of the leading personages in England, and undoubtedly had the highest reputation of any living man; he had made himself conspicuous by his open disapproval of the ecclesiastical measures of Henry and his parliament; and if these measures were to be carried into effect, then the life of the great statesman must be forfeited. There was no middle course possible, and of this More was conscious. Other circumstances, too, were against him—notably his late unfortunate connection with the affair of the Nun of Kent, and his close and intimate friendship with Fisher, bishop of Rochester, who was accused, and not apparently without some ground, of treason. It was during those sad months in the Tower that he wrote his last and most beautiful religious treatises —"The Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation," and the unfinished "Meditation upon the Passion of Christ."

Among the points objected to by More was the acknowledgment of Henry VIII. under the title of "Supreme Head on earth of the Church of England under Christ." He was frequently visited by members of the king's council, who endeavoured, but in

* See Excursus D, Vol. III.

SIR THOMAS MORE AND HIS DAUGHTER.

(From the picture by W. F. Yeames, R.A.)

vain, to persuade him to submit himself to the king. Once the all-powerful minister, Cromwell, came alone, and, by the memory of his old friendship with Henry, urged him to relent from his resolution. But memories of old friendship suggested by Cromwell, or the terrors of a public death, equally failed to move him. More was fearless in the presence of death ; it meant little to him, so intense was his faith in the future and serener life ; and from the day of his arrest he had looked forward to the scaffold as a certain and not far-removed goal.

About the middle of 1535 he was tried for treason in Westminster Hall—"the most illustrious prisoner who ever listened to his sentence there," as he is termed by a famous historian, who had little love for More's views. He walked from the Tower but feebly, being weak from long confinement. The state trial ended, as such trials in those days almost invariably did, by the condemnation of the prisoner. The frightful punishment for treason was commuted to death on the scaffold ; and the presiding judge, lord chancellor Audley, mentioned this last favour as an instance of the royal clemency. "God forbid," replied More, with a solitary touch of bitter wit, "that the king should use any more such mercy unto any of my friends, and God keep all my posterity from all such pardons." When all was over and the condemnation had been pronounced, for the last time the judges adjured him to have pity on himself, and offered to reopen the court if he would reconsider his determination. The condemned man smiled, and with his old winning charm replied in words which will never be forgotten : "My lords, I have only to say that, like as the blessed Paul was present when the martyr Stephen died, and kept the clothes of them who stoned Stephen, and yet both Paul and Stephen now be both saints in heaven, and therefore shall continue friends for ever, so I trust and pray that though your lordships have been on earth my judges, yet we may hereafter meet in heaven together to our everlasting salvation. May God preserve you all, especially my sovereign lord the king, and grant him faithful counsellors."

He was to return to the Tower by water. On the stairs of the Tower wharf was waiting his best beloved daughter, Margaret Roper. The story here is told by More's grandson. When she espied her father, she broke through the armed guard surrounding the notable prisoner, fearing she might never see or touch him again in this world, and, then kissing him, able to say nothing but "Oh ! my father, my father !" He blessed her, and told her that whatsoever he should suffer, though he were innocent, yet it was not without the will of God, urging her to accommodate her will to God's blessed pleasure, and to be patient for his loss. The touching story goes on to say : "She was no sooner parted from him, and had gone scarce ten steps, when she, not satisfied with the former farewell, like one who had forgot herself, having neither respect to herself nor to the press of people about him, suddenly turned back and ran hastily to him, and took him by the neck and divers times together kissed him ; whereat he spoke not a word, but, carrying still his gravity, tears fell also from his eyes ; yea,

there were very few in all the troop who could refrain thereat from weeping, no, not the guards themselves. Yet at the last, with a full heart, she was severed from him, at which time another of our women embraced him, and my aunt's (Margaret Roper's) maid, Dorothy Collis, did the like, of whom he said after it was homely but very lovingly done."

He never saw this dear daughter, who was, perhaps, the only person he very deeply loved on earth, again. Four days yet remained to him. These he spent in prayer and thought. At daybreak on the day he was appointed to suffer, Sir Thomas Pope awoke him out of sleep and told him it was the king's pleasure he should die at nine o'clock that morning. "I am much bounden to the king," he said, "for the benefits and honours he has bestowed on me; and so help me God, most of all am I bounden to him that it hath pleased his majesty to rid me so shortly out of the miseries of this present world." Pope told him that the king desired he would not "use many words on the scaffold." More replied that it should be as his grace wished; he had intended to have spoken, but no matter wherewith the king would have been offended. Then he talked of his funeral, and begged that his family might be present.

Pope, who was an old friend, rose to leave; he took More's hand and burst into tears. "Quiet yourself, Mr. Pope," said the man who was just about to die, "and be not discomfited, for I trust we shall once see each other full merrily, when we shall live and love together in eternal bliss." He then proceeded to dress himself in his most costly attire. "It was for the profit of the headsman, who was to do him so great service," he said. Sir William Kingston, the lieutenant of the Tower, begged him to put on a plainer suit. He at once complied, and sent the executioner instead a gold angel, as a token that he loved him extremely. About nine of the clock he came out with the lieutenant of the Tower, pale, and often looking up to heaven; he carried in his hand a red cross.

The scaffold had been somewhat clumsily put together, and as he put his foot on the ladder, it shook. "See me safe up," he said to Sir William Kingston; "for my coming down I can shift for myself." He began to speak to the crowd standing near. The sheriff begged him not to say anything, so he just asked for their prayers, and that they should remember that he died in the faith of the holy Catholic church, and a faithful servant of God and the king. Then he repeated a psalm, and kissing the headsman, bound a cloth over his eyes, and kneeling down, laid his neck on the block. Immediately he made a sign with his hand, as if to stay for a moment the fatal stroke, then he moved aside his beard, murmuring, "Pity that should be cut, *that* has not committed treason." With "which strange words—the strangest, perhaps, ever uttered at such a time—the life most famous in Europe for eloquence and wisdom closed for ever." *

"So," writes his grandson and biographer, "with alacrity and spiritual joy, he received the fatal axe, which no sooner had severed his head from his body, but his soul was carried by the angels into eternal

* Froude.

glory; . . . and then he found those words true which he had often spoken, that a man may lose his head and have no harm."

"This was the execution of Sir Thomas More, an act which was sounded into the far corners of the earth, and was the world's wonder, as well for the circumstances under which it was perpetrated as for the preternatural calmness with which it was borne. Something of his calmness may have been due to his natural temperament,

SIR THOMAS MORE'S HOUSE AT CHELSEA.

something to an unaffected weariness of a world which in his eyes was plunging into the ruin of the latter days. But those fair hues of sunny cheerfulness caught their colour from the simplicity of his faith; and never was there a Christian's victory over death more grandly evidenced than in the last scene, lighted with its lambent humour." *

The comment of the eloquent and able apologist of Henry VIII. on this close of the fair life of Henry's victim is remarkable. "It was at once," he wrote, "most piteous and most inevitable." The last words are emphatically true, though perhaps scarcely in the sense in which the writer intended. The cutting off of More was surely inevitable and necessary, if the Reformation were to be proceeded with on the lines chalked out by the king and his advisers. More intensely disapproved of these lines thus chalked out; and the marked disapproval of so splendid a genius, of so pure and devout a soul as More's, might—probably would—have wrecked the work of Henry. Here for the present we must leave this terrible episode of our story, having anticipated much, for the sake of presenting a fairly complete picture of this great and beautiful figure.

A thrill of horror ran through Europe when the news of the execution became generally known. The general grief and indignation was common to Rome, to the emperor, to the king of France, and even to some of the Protestant princes of Germany. So general was the grief and amazement abroad, that Henry, through his foreign ambassadors, deigned to give a formal vindication of the act. To brand him as a traitor, no indignity was spared to the lifeless remains of the scholar, the writer, the statesmen, so long the ornament of his country. The head was boiled, and the disfigured features of him whom the world so loved and admired looked down from the traitors' spikes on the stream of heeding or of unheeding traffic passing and repassing over London Bridge. The state papers circulated at Rome and Paris and among the courts of Europe spoke of him as a traitor, but upon evidence never produced at the trial, and of which no trace has ever since been seen or heard.

* Froude: "History of England," chap. ix.

CHAPTER XL.

ERASMUS, AND THE RECOVERY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

English Inspiration of the Work of Erasmus—His Early Life—Removal to England—Acquaintance with Colet and More—Their Profound Influence upon his Character—Greek Professorship at Cambridge—Undertakes a Version of the Greek New Testament Text—Recovery of this Text by Europe on the Fall of Constantinople—Its Immeasurable Importance to the Church—Enthusiastic Reception of it—Its Preface—Its Transforming Power—Groundwork of our present Version—Elevates Erasmus to a Position of European Fame—Letter from the Emperor Charles V.—Later Years and Death of the Scholar—The Complutensian Polyglott of Cardinal Ximenes—Place of Erasmus in the Reformation of the Church.

THERE was a third pioneer of the Reformation in England, greater than Colet, or even More, whose influence was more far-reaching, more lasting, than either of the first two, whose lives and works we have been painting. We have already mentioned and quoted from Erasmus as the contemporary and intimate friend of Colet and More; but we must now recount more definitely, though briefly, his own life and work. We in England are not wrong in claiming Erasmus as specially the chiefest of *our* pioneer reformers. He was, it is true, a native of Holland; his early unhappy life was mostly spent in the Low Countries and in Paris; and the works by which he will always be known were printed and published at Basle in Switzerland, where he closed his eventful, honoured

career. But in spite of this, England was the country he loved best; his chosen friends and associates were Englishmen. It was *their* love and friendship which, speaking from a human standpoint, really ordered his life and inspired the noblest efforts of his surpassing genius. It was in England that most of his best work was done, although his actual sojourning among us did not exceed eight or ten years altogether. He ever speaks and writes of England with the tenderest affection, and far on in life styles it his "adopted country" and the "chosen home of his old age." In the wide world which loved and hated, admired and feared him, Erasmus possessed no friends like Colet and More; no generous helper and patron like archbishop Warham; no sovereign who was ever ready to welcome and back him up like Henry VIII.

Desiderius Erasmus was born in Rotterdam in A.D. 1467, when Edward IV. was reigning in England. His parents, who were in fairly prosperous circumstances, died when the subject of our memoir was still quite young. His was a desolate, unloved youth, with the old story of careless guardians and an orphan boy, and a little heritage melted away. The friendless orphan Erasmus, still quite young, was partly forced, partly cajoled, to take the irrevocable vows in a house of Augustinian canons. He was a brilliant and sickly youth, always passionately devoted to books and learning, but utterly without any vocation for the monastic life; and in the house in which he made his profession he found little sympathy. He despised his companions, and hated the life. The bishop of Cambrai took notice of him, and, with the consent of the prior of the religious house, allowed him to leave the community, and for a time he resided at Cambrai with the bishop. But the young Erasmus's one master-passion was study, and after a time he went to study at the university of Paris.

Dates and times are very uncertain during the early manhood of the young scholar. It was not a happy, and save for the somewhat fitful friendship and kindness of the bishop of Cambrai, was a lonely and desolate season for Erasmus. The period of his Paris studies was evidently darkened by excesses and extravagances, possibly even with something akin to riotous living; and all this time, be it remembered, the young student was bound by the stern vows of the Augustinian order to which he belonged. Still, he worked as few men of his day and time worked, and laid the foundation of his subsequent marvellous proficiency in languages, philosophy, and theology. Among his fellow-students at Paris he obtained a great repute, and was reckoned among the most promising scholars of his time. Poverty, however, dogged his footsteps. His slender patrimony had disappeared; the little allowance made him by his patron the bishop of Cambrai was utterly insufficient for the life he was leading at Paris. He eked out his resources by taking pupils, and soon obtained a high reputation as a teacher. But we know little of these "Paris" days; in after life he said little about them. They were at best but a blurred, disfigured page of memories, containing little that Erasmus cared to dwell on when he became the first man of letters —the world-famed scholar of his generation.

We have mentioned his sickly, delicate constitution. In the midst of his Paris student life he was seized by a severe illness. This was not surprising, for the wild and somewhat irregular life he was leading was ill-fitted for the strain of mental effort required for the studies to which he in real earnest devoted many long hours each day and night. Then, too, his purse was unequal to the expenses of the gay and often costly recreations with which he enlivened his study hours; and, no doubt, often the young student was ill-fed, ill-housed, ill-warmed. The illness well-nigh swept him into the grave. He shuddered at the thought of dying, and higher thoughts seem to have inspired him as he slowly mended and regained his strength. One of his many letters which we possess, written about this time, foreshadows something of his nobler after-life. We find this sentence in it: "All I ask for is leisure to live wholly to God, to repent of the sins of my foolish youth, to study Holy Scripture, and to read or write something of real value." He dreaded being recalled, or being obliged through ill-health or utter want of means to pursue his studies, to return to his cloister, which he evidently hated. "I could do nothing of this," he went on to say, "in a convent; never was a tenderer plant. I could not bear fasts and vigils when I was at my best; even here, where I am well cared for, I fall sick." He was evidently forgetting the wild, careless life he had been leading at Paris. Just then he longed to go to Italy and study theology, and he lamented sorely that he had neither health for the journey or money for the necessary expenses.

He made at this time some influential and wealthy friends, and for a time he was absent from Paris; but he soon returned, and was again surrounded with pupils. At Paris and elsewhere men began to speak of the young sickly scholar-priest, with his great learning, his sparkling wit, his ceaseless railings against his hard destiny, poverty, ill-health, and longings he was unable to realise; ever the most charming of companions, of men of the world and scholars alike. In his letters he shows how wretched he was—tossed to and fro; longing for higher things, yet always dragged down to the things of the flesh; ever carrying about a dying body; with a soul capable of the highest things, yet without any vital religion or sure ground of Christian hope. How near was the scholar whose name was soon to be in all the churches, over and over again, to utter shipwreck of body and soul! "I am in utter wretchedness," he wrote to a dear friend, "worn out with sorrow, persecuted by enemies, deserted by my friends, and made Fortune's football; yet I have committed no fault. . . . . I am a sad afflicted being who hates himself, who hates to live, and yet is not allowed to die. . . . . May God change my state for the better or make an end of me."

Happily, at this moment one of his Paris pupils, a son of lord Mountjoy, a distinguished English nobleman, invited him to England, and a new chapter in his life began. Here we have a certain date: the wandering scholar came to London at the close of 1497. In London, under the Mountjoy protection, he was received with great kindness, and was introduced to two of the most promising of English scholars—

More, who then only twenty years of age, and Colet, who was the same age as Erasmus, about thirty.

With his new friends, in the spring of 1498, we find him at Oxford, where his fame as a rare and striking scholar and genius had preceded him. Richard Charnock, prior of St. Mary's college, became his friend, and the life-long friendship with Colet and More became fast cemented in that first Oxford residence. Colet, who was then delivering some of his famous lectures on St. Paul's Epistles, became the object of Erasmus's fervid admiration. At last the poor erring genius had found an ideal which he felt he could worthily strive after. The burning words of the eloquent lecturer, fervid preacher, generous, loving, self-denying student, who lived the life he preached, touched the wayward, passionate heart of Erasmus; and the new life of the greatest scholar of the century may be dated from that Oxford visit, where he had the rare fortune of becoming Colet's dearest friend and More's intimate associate. The friendship of these three men, who did so much to bring about the great change in England which was now impending, remained unbroken until death; and it is not too much to say that the master-work of Erasmus's life, which we shall presently describe, may be looked upon as the outcome of Colet's influence upon him. It is singularly interesting to read the letters of the gay and frivolous wandering scholar *before* his saintly friend had inspired him with nobler views of duty, and to compare them with what we know of the subsequent life of the great biblical scholar, who consecrated most of his remaining years to a work on the Book of Life—to which work may be ascribed much of what was truest and most enduring in the Reformation years after.

Between 1498 and 1514 much of Erasmus's time was spent in England between London, Oxford, and Cambridge. He played the part alternately of a student and teacher at each of these places. At Cambridge during several years he was the recognised teacher or professor of Greek. The materials for his master-work he gradually collected, and the scholarship necessary for its execution he slowly and painfully acquired, for he was ever sickly and often laid by with illness. A somewhat detailed account of this his chiefest and most enduring work will be interesting and useful, considering how enormous an influence its publication and subsequent wide popularity exercised upon the Reformation, on the Continent as in England.

The Renaissance of Greek literature, and the publication of the original Greek text of the New Testament, helped forward the Reformation in a way scarcely yet grasped by the great majority of men, who have little time for study. The (Latin) Vulgate translation, then in universal use, was faulty and inaccurate; was in many places a bad rendering of the original Greek. Not a few of the current interpretations of the text were seen to be impossible, when brought into contact with the original language in which the Gospels and Epistles had been written. A mass of scholastic subtleties overlaid the New Testament writings. Men like Colet felt that the urgent necessity of the age

CONVOCATION OF CLERGY.

(By permission, from the picture by Sir John Gilbert, R.A., P.R.W.S., in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy.)

was to give to the church the *original simple text* of the New Testament scriptures, with all the later mediæval errors stripped off; then men would see for themselves what was the mind of Christ, what was the real teaching of Paul and his inspired companions. At this juncture a great scholar and original thinker, Erasmus, came forward, and, largely under the influence of men like Colet, devoted the best years of his life to the production of an edition of the New Testament in the original Greek, with a new and free Latin translation of his own, which men might compare with the original Greek printed in the same volume. This work was especially an English one. The Renaissance of *Greek Theology* is one of the glories of England. It sprang from Oxford and Cambridge, not from Rome and Florence.

In the last half of the fifteenth century, when, as we have already shown, owing to the fall of Constantinople and the presence of the Greek exiles, the western world found itself face to face with an ancient literature with which it was absolutely unacquainted, Italy at once recognised that this ancient Greek literature was finer than any which was already familiar. With intense ardour its scholars devoted themselves to its study. The newly-discovered printing-press came to their assistance, and a curious classical revival passed over all the Italian schools. Plato and Aristotle, at Rome and Florence, were preferred to Paul and John. As in architecture, where we see the mediæval church of St. Peter at Rome giving place to the huge classical temple which still throws its vast shadow over the apostle's tomb; so in theology, the teaching of the apostles was largely put aside, and the Greek philosophy of the newly-recovered ancient writers substituted in their room. Colet, when as a student he visited Italy, found the general tendencies of the Italian schools sadly sceptical. The atmosphere of the papal court was more semi-pagan than Christian. The famous school of Padua had even become positively a focus of atheism.

But among the precious manuscripts brought by the exiled Greeks, were other writings besides those of Plato and Aristotle, and the Greek dramatists and historians. Many of those yellow and time-discoloured parchments contained books and treatises also written in the long-forgotten Greek characters, more precious far, in the eyes of some scholars and thinkers, than the choicest works of Plato and Aristotle, or than the most brilliant of the tragedies of Æschylus and Sophocles. These were the gospels of the holy four, and the epistles of the chosen servants of Christ; and in a lesser degree precious, but still of priceless value, the scanty remains of writers who lived in the age immediately succeeding the death of John and Paul. In estimating the importance of the Renaissance of the Greek language, it should never be forgotten that the early church was almost exclusively a *Greek-speaking community*. Not only was Greek the language of the whole New Testament, but well-nigh all the important early treatises, apologies, etc., of the Christian fathers that we possess, are written in Greek. In Rome, strange as it may seem, very many among the poorer population were Greek either in descent or in speech. Out of the

names of the fifteen bishops of Rome up to the close of the second century, four only are Latin. Even in the far west, in Gaul, the churches of Vienne and Lyons used Greek in the well-known story of their persecutions, A.D. 177; and the great work of Irenæus of Lyons against heresies is written in the same language. It has been conjectured, with good reason, that Greek was at first the liturgical language of Rome.*

This was the literature, which included the New Testament and the writings of men, some of whom had known the apostles—writings few in number, but measureless in their importance to Christianity, to which the knowledge of Greek was the indispensable key; and it was for this high end that Colet and his Oxford school valued the new learning. To men like Colet, and the yet greater Erasmus, whom Colet inspired with a large portion of his own devout and fervid spirit, classical antiquity had comparatively little significance compared with ancient Christianity. These men, this *English* school, different from the scholars of Italy, studied Greek mainly that they might better know the mind of Paul and the Evangelists.

The idea of Colet and of Erasmus, in the matter of reforming a church which they felt with good reason was, indeed, fast losing its influence over the people, was a quiet though earnest reformation from *within*. This they hoped to bring about through the good sense of the nobler spirits among the hierarchy of the church; who, when they quietly compared the very words of Christ and His apostles with the superstitions which disfigured the practices and once simple ritual of the church; when they saw these words without the glosses with which the schoolmen and others had hidden and obscured the true text, would surely do away with all those soul-destroying customs and practices so utterly foreign to the mind of Christ: such as relic-worship, image-adoration, indulgences, Mariolatry. Colet's wonderful exposition of St. Paul's epistles at Oxford, and then his burning and eloquent sermons in London after he became dean of St. Paul's, began this grave scholarly work; which was taken up, developed, and published abroad far and wide by Erasmus's edition of the Greek Testament, with his own Latin translation and his weighty preface.

It was in A.D. 1516—some twenty years after that first meeting at Oxford—not very long before his death, that Colet thus wrote to his old friend, whom he had turned from the way of death to the way of life. Reading these old letters, we seem to hear the voice of the true teacher of righteousness—feeling that his own life was drawing to a close—rejoicing in his successful work, as he praises with no unstinting praise his old pupil and imitator. The letter is written after reading the edition of the New Testament just produced by him.

"You cannot easily believe, my dear Erasmus, how much joy your letter gave me, . . . for I learned from it that you are likely to return to us, which would be very delightful to me, and to your other friends, of whom you have a great many here. . . . What you say about the 'New Testament' I can understand. The volumes of your new edition are

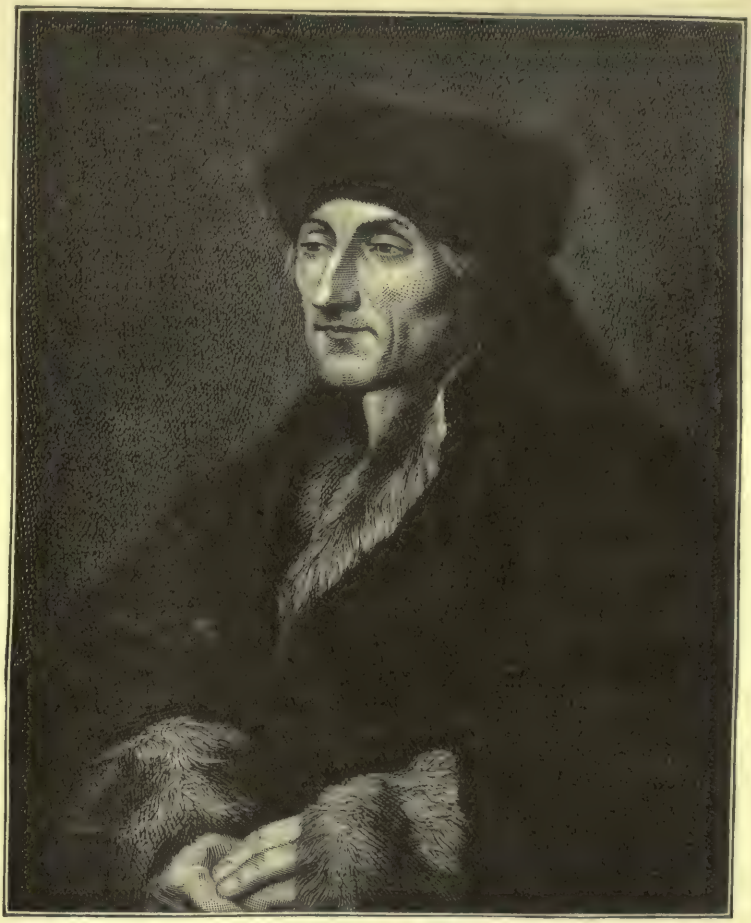
* See Bishop Westcott: "On the Canon of the New Testament."

here both eagerly bought and everywhere read. By many your labours are received with approval and admiration. . . . For myself, I so love your work, and so clasp to my heart this new edition of yours, that it excites mingled feelings. For at one time I am seized with sorrow that I have not that knowledge of Greek, without which one is good for nothing; at another time I rejoice in that light which you have shed forth from the sun of your genius. Indeed, Erasmus, I marvel at the fruitfulness of your mind in the conception, production, and daily completion of so much during a life so unsettled, and without the assistance of any large and regular income. . . .

"As to the peaceful resting-place which you say you long for, I also wish for one for you, both peaceful and happy; both your age and your studies require it. I wish, too, that this your final resting-place may be with us, if you think us worthy of so great a man; . . . you have here some who love you exceedingly. Our friend the archbishop of Canterbury (Warham) a few days ago spoke much of you, and desires your presence here very much. . . . Go on, Erasmus, as you have given us the New Testament in Latin" [this was a new translation by Erasmus appended to the famous Greek text], "illustrated it by your exposition, and given us your commentary most at length on the Gospels . . . you will confer a great boon on those who delight to read your writings, if you will explain the meaning of the Gospels; and in so doing, you will make your name immortal. Immortal, did I say? The name of Erasmus can never perish, but you will confer eternal glory on your name; and toiling on in the name of Jesus, you will become a partaker of His eternal life. . . . That you should call *me* happy, I marvel. I should think myself happy if, even in the extremest poverty, I had a thousandth part of that learning and wisdom which you have got without wealth. If you will let me, I will become your disciple even in learning Greek, notwithstanding my advanced years, recollecting that Cato learned Greek in his old age, and that you yourself, of equal age with me, are studying Hebrew. Love me as ever. Farewell."

The New Testament in Greek of Erasmus, with its faithful Latin translation and its noble preface, was not only the first Greek New Testament printed and published, but it was the first New Testament in its original language ever given to the churches of the west. With its impressive preface, it may be taken as the expression of the views held by the little band of Oxford reformers, of whom Colet was the head, and Erasmus the great exponent. It was published in 1516, and its success was amazing, considering how unaccustomed as yet were the public to printed books. It is said that one hundred thousand copies were sold in France alone. The interest in the work was unabated; five successive editions, each containing various emendations from MSS. and other sources, were published during the lifetime of Erasmus. The fifth edition appeared in A.D. 1535, the year before his death, and although it contained many severe and even bitter comments upon the state of things which then prevailed, it was published with the leave and approbation of the reigning Pope, Leo. X.

The preface, or paraclesis, as it was termed, contained much weighty matter. In it Erasmus appeals to the two great schools into which, roughly, the western church was then divided. He alluded, or rather appealed to the free-thinking philosophic school of the Italian Renaissance, comparing Christ with the great philosophers so much admired and studied in Italy. Christ's teaching, he urged, was simpler, better adapted for all. "No age, no sex, no condition of life but could grasp its teaching and its promises, while other philosophies were removed out of the range of most minds; for the Christian, no anxious preparatory learning was needful. Its viaticum was simple, and at hand for all. Only bring a pious and open heart, imbued, above all things, with a pure and simple faith. For Christ," he went on to



DESIDERIUS ERASMUS.
(*From the portrait by Holbein.*)

say, "wrote his mysteries to be published as openly as possible. I wish that even the weakest woman should read the Gospel —should read the epistles of Paul; I would that these were translated into all languages. . . . I long that the husbandman should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle, that the traveller should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey."

Then, turning from the free-thinking classical Renaissance to the conservative school, which clung with an unreasoning persistence to the schoolmen, to the old mediæval corruptions of Christianity, to the errors of the Vulgate, to the false interpretation of texts, to the mass of legendary lore and superstitious additions, and bringing into contrast with all these the simple Gospel message, he asked, "Why is a greater portion of our lives given to the study of the schoolmen than of the Gospels? . . . What are Alexander, Albertus, Thomas [Aquinas], Occam, in comparison with Christ; what in comparison with Peter, or Paul, or John? If the footprints of Christ be anywhere shown to us, we kneel down and adore. Why do we not rather venerate and adore the living and breathing picture of Him in these books? If the vesture of Christ be exhibited, where will we not go to kiss it? Yet if the whole wardrobe of Christ were shown, nothing could represent Christ more vividly and truly than these evangelical writings. Statues of wood and stone we decorate with gold and gems for the love of Christ. They only profess to give us the form of the body. These books present us with a living image of His most holy mind. Were we to have seen Him with our own eyes, we should not have had so intimate a knowledge as they give of Christ—speaking, healing, dying, rising again, as it were, in our own actual presence."

We have quoted at some little length from this noble preface of Erasmus to his edition of the Greek New Testament (A.D. 1516), because in it, in a few words, we have the mind of the English early Reformation school, as well as of Erasmus, whom we fairly claim as an English reformer, seeing that he drew his inspiration mainly from English scholars and thinkers; seeing that during the eight or ten years he spent in England he prepared the really great and enduring work of his life, his edition of the Greek New Testament, at the instance of his English friends, who induced him to devote his magnificent talents and splendid industry to the noble work they deemed of such paramount importance.

The peaceful, quiet reformation of the church by the church, hoped for, prayed for, worked for, by Colet and More and their brilliant disciple Erasmus, never came to pass. The great change, in the divine Providence, was destined to pass over the church in another and more fiery form. But their work, nevertheless, was to endure; and through all the period of stress and storm, while the reformers in England, as on the Continent, were tossed hither and thither, were swayed backwards and forwards by the wild storm-winds which had arisen, the great principles laid down by Erasmus and his friends remained the groundwork of all reformation teaching.

The Book of God, the New Testament, purified of all human additions and misconceptions, which Erasmus first restored to western Christendom, was ever looked to as the one source of all true faith. With these pioneers of the Reformation, as we have loved to style them, the Christian religion consisted not in the blind, unreasoning reception of a creed upon any human authority, however venerable, but in loving and loyal devotion to the person of Christ; "and where should they go for a knowledge of Christ, if not to the authentic writings of those who were nearest in their relations to Him? . . . They would go to the books themselves which contained these writings, and read them in their original language, and, if possible, in the earliest copies, and so catch the spirit of Him whom they were striving to know for themselves." *

"It was finished at last—text and translation printed," writes Froude in his vivid biography of Erasmus, "and the living facts of Christianity, the persons of Christ and the Apostles, their history, their lives and their teaching, were revealed to an astonished world. For the first time the laity were able to see side by side the Christianity which converted the world, and the Christianity of the church with a Pope, cardinal princes, ecclesiastical courts, and a mythology of lies. The effect was to be a spiritual earthquake."

Erasmus finally left England a little more than a year before the publication of the great work of his life. His presence was necessary at Basle, where the New Testament was being brought out at the famous printing establishment of Froben. More than thirty years had passed since the Basle printing-press had been first set up by Johann Amerbach, and it had acquired already a European reputation, and had won for the city of Basle, on the green rushing waters of the Rhine, the proud position of one of the principal centres of reviving learning. Once more, therefore, Erasmus found himself on the Continent. He had bade farewell to England, and was now nearly fifty years of age; still sickly, often laid by with painful and weary illness, but confessedly the first man of letters in Europe. His witty and entertaining books, such as the "Adagia," his graver treatises, such as the "Enchiridion of a Christian Soldier," had been read and admired by tens of thousands in all countries, by all ranks and orders. His Greek teaching work at Cambridge, as the foremost of the teachers of the new learning; the high estimation in which he was held by famous scholars, such as Colet and More, had given him a name and a place among the known wits and scholars of the western world. He was admired, petted, and feared as a brilliant, wandering man of letters; was looked upon by the old conservative mediævalist party in the church as a somewhat erratic and dangerous writer, thinker, talker; but was hardly as yet regarded as a serious friend or enemy.

But the publication of the New Testament in Greek, with its translation and scathing notes, with its profound and powerful preface, setting forth the meaning and object of the work in language

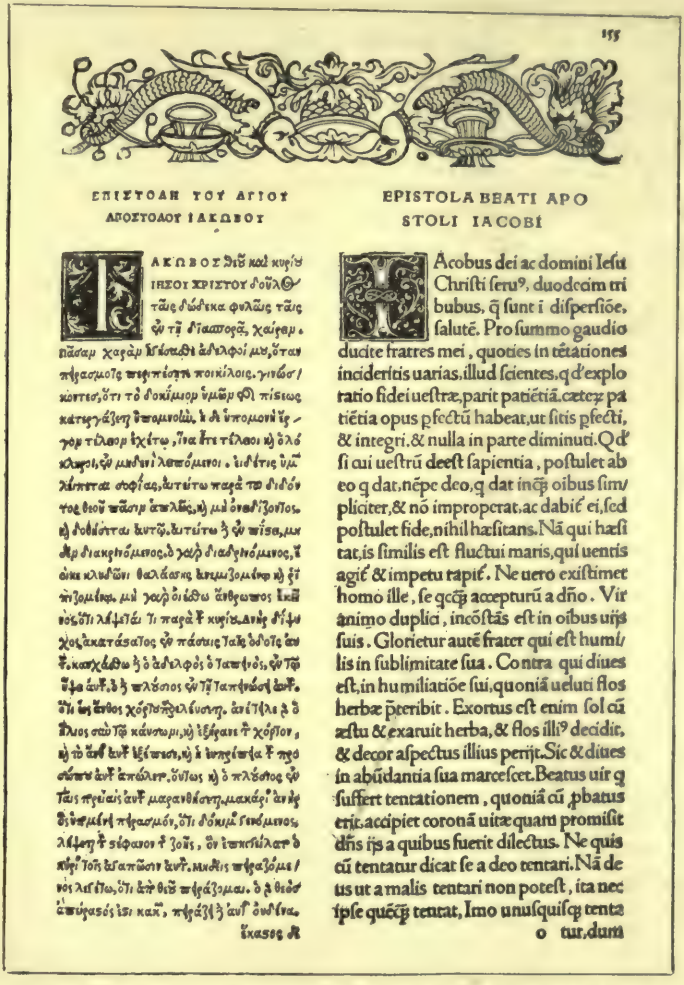
* See Seebohm: "The Oxford Reformers," chapter xi.

which breathes intense conviction, literally took the world by storm. For many years he had been patiently labouring at it; and when it appeared, with Pope Leo X.'s approval stamped upon its marvellous pages, its editor received a general ovation, in some respects commensurate with its weight and acknowledged importance. It is not too much to say that during the long roll of Christian centuries —from the date of the death of St. John —no book had appeared which has so largely influenced humanity; and the still novel introduction of the printing press sent it out rapidly over the whole western world.

It is with us still. The history of the English Bible, as far as the New Testament is concerned, is as follows. Our translators chose as their Greek text—from which they mainly worked—the edition of *Stephens'* Greek Testament put out in A.D. 1550. But Stephens in that famous edition chiefly adopted—save only in the Apocalypse, where he largely followed the Greek text printed in the Complutensian Polyglott—*the text he found in Erasmus's fifth edition*, published the year before his death, in 1535. This has been taken as the standard or "received text" in England, and, until the noble efforts in our own day to further revise the Greek text, has been universally used and read. It is still styled the "received Text." The uncounted multitudes in England who have found and are finding still in the Book of Life, in the words of the Redeemer and His immediate disciples, their joy, their comfort and hope, owe their priceless treasure mainly to the labours of the strange man and matchless scholar, whose life-story we have been trying to paint.

The change in Erasmus's fortunes, after the day when Froben, the Basle printer, forwarded the bulky packages containing the first edition of the "Greek Testament" into every European centre of culture and commerce, was very striking. He found himself no more the poor vagrant scholar, ever impecunious, ever obliged to play the mendicant, if not for daily bread, at least for ways and means to pursue his deep and successful studies; now dancing attendance on some great lord or wealthy ecclesiastic, now wearing out his slender thread of health and energy, by teaching and lecturing at Cambridge or elsewhere. After 1516 he had but to select a luxurious home. Learned and famous universities, wealthy populous cities, stately royal courts, literally begged for the honour of his presence, offering him position, wealth, dignity, if he would but take up his abode among them. In universities like Basle in the south, and Louvain in the north, he was more than a welcome, honoured guest. In such homes of learning, where naturally he best loved to dwell, he found it difficult to preserve the hours of solitude necessary for his perpetual studies, so great was the court paid to him by the scholar world of Europe. King Henry VIII. and his minister Wolsey placed at his disposal a suitable London house and a handsome income, if only he would come back to England. The magnificent Francis I., so soon as he had become king, asked him to make France his home. At Brussels the young archduke Charles—afterwards known as the emperor Charles V.—and

his brother Ferdinand, welcomed him with the greatest warmth. From these imperial potentates, he had but to say among her trusted adherents; and if Erasmus had chosen to accept her overtures, he might have worn the mitre of



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ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΥ ΙΑΚΩΒΟΥ

ΙΑΚΩΒΟΣ θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ δοῦλος τοῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ, χαίρειν. πᾶσαν χαρὰν ἡγήσασθε ἀδελφοί μου, ὅταν πειρασμοῖς περιπέσητε ποικίλοις. γινώσκοντες, ὅτι τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως κατεργάζεται ὑπομονήν. ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ ἔργον τέλειον ἐχέτω, ἵνα ἦτε τέλειοι καὶ ὁλόκληροι, ἐν μηδενὶ λειπόμενοι. εἰ δέ τις ὑμῶν λείπεται σοφίας, αἰτείτω παρὰ τοῦ διδόντος θεοῦ πᾶσιν ἁπλῶς, καὶ μὴ ὀνειδίζοντος. καὶ δοθήσεται αὐτῷ. αἰτείτω δὲ ἐν πίστει, μηδὲν διακρινόμενος. ὁ γὰρ διακρινόμενος ἔοικε κλύδωνι θαλάσσης ἀνεμιζομένῳ καὶ ῥιπιζομένῳ. μὴ γὰρ οἰέσθω ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος ὅτι λήμψεταί τι παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου. ἀνὴρ δίψυχος, ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ. καυχάσθω δὲ ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὁ ταπεινὸς ἐν τῷ ὕψει αὐτοῦ. ὁ δὲ πλούσιος ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ. ὅτι ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου παρελεύσεται. ἀνέτειλε γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος σὺν τῷ καύσωνι, καὶ ἐξήρανε τὸν χόρτον, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτοῦ ἐξέπεσεν, καὶ ἡ εὐπρέπεια τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἀπώλετο. οὕτως καὶ ὁ πλούσιος ἐν ταῖς πορείαις αὐτοῦ μαρανθήσεται. μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν, ὅτι δόκιμος γενόμενος, λήμψεται τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς, ὃν ἐπηγγείλατο ὁ κύριος τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν. μηδεὶς πειραζόμενος λεγέτω, ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ πειράζομαι. ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἀπείραστός ἐστι κακῶν, πειράζει δὲ αὐτὸς οὐδένα.

ἔκαστος δὲ

EPISTOLA BEATI APOSTOLI IACOBI

Acobus dei ac domini Ieſu Chriſti ſeruꝰ, duodecim tribubus, q̄ ſunt i diſperſiõe, ſalutē. Pro ſummo gaudio ducite fratres mei, quoties in tẽtationes incideritis uarias, illud ſcientes, q d explo ratio fidei ueſtræ, parit patiẽtiã. cætex patiẽtia opus pfectũ habeat, ut ſitis pfecti, & integri. & nulla in parte diminuti. Qd ſi cui ueſtrũ deeſt ſapientia, poſtulet ab eo q dat, nẽpe deo, q dat inc̄p oibus ſimpliciter, & nõ improperat, ac dabit ei, ſed poſtulet fide, nihil hæſitans. Nã qui hæſitat, is ſimilis eſt fluctui maris, qui uentis agit & impetu rapit. Ne uero exiſtimet homo ille, ſe qcq̄ accepturũ a dño. Vir animo duplici, incõſtãs eſt in oibus uiis ſuis. Glorietur autẽ frater qui eſt humilis in ſublimitate ſua. Contra qui diues eſt, in humiliatiõe ſui, quoniã ueluti flos herbæ p̄teribit. Exortus eſt enim ſol cũ æſtu & exaruit herba, & flos illi⁹ decidit, & decor aſpectus illius periit. Sic & diues in abũdantia ſua marceſcet. Beatus uir q ſuffert tentationem, quoniã cũ ꝓbatus erit, accipiet coronã uitæ quam promiſit dñs iis a quibus fuerit dilectus. Ne quis cũ tentatur dicat ſe a deo tentari. Nã deus ut a malis tentari non poteſt, ita nec ipſe quẽq̄ tentat. Imo unuſquiſq; tenta

o tur, dum

PAGE FROM THE FIRST EDITION (BASLE, 1516) OF ERASMUS' NEW TESTAMENT, CONTAINING THE BEGINNING OF THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES. (*British Museum.*)

what position, place, or honour he desired. Perhaps stranger than all, Rome, to whose exorbitant pretensions, although a loyal servant of the church, he had dealt the severest blows, was eager to receive him some distinguished see in the papal gift, or even aspired to the yet higher dignity of the red hat of a cardinal and a prince of the church.

But none of these things moved him.

Laden with costly presents, which, constantly repeated from various quarters, enabled him to live in affluence without care, Erasmus preferred his perfect independence of pope or emperor or king, and lived out his next twenty honoured years as an untitled, unbeneficed, wandering scholar. The only dignity he deigned to accept was the great though indefinite position of imperial councillor, which was conferred on him by the emperor Charles V. directly after his election to the imperial throne. This was a rank in some respects corresponding to the present position of an English privy councillor, involving no special duties. The appellation, however, well expressed the general status of Erasmus in the western world during the last eighteen or twenty years of his career.

He was the counsellor whose advice was eagerly sought on all sides, and by most parties, in the burning theological disputes which were then so largely occupying the attention of the western nations. In England his many friends continually corresponded with the distinguished divine who was so closely and intimately associated with the party of religious reform, and who was regarded as the brightest ornament of the devoted English company, whose undying title to honour it will ever be, that it had consecrated the new learning to the cause of true religion. The German reformers were eager that Erasmus, with his all-powerful reputation, should put himself at their head; and later, when he doubted the wisdom of Luther's action, and openly avowed his disapproval of many of his words and works, the more thoughtful and moderate of Luther's friends—men like Melancthon—still sought his advice and scholarly counsels. With the emperor Charles V. his relations partook almost of an affectionate intimacy. "His loving letters," wrote Erasmus to a friend in 1530, "are more precious than his gifts." Only considerations of a tortuous policy, which ever mainly influenced this mighty potentate, kept Erasmus from being the trusted counsellor in religious matters of the sovereign whose dominions stretched from the Spanish shores washed by the Atlantic and Mediterranean to the countries watered by the Danube in central Europe. At Rome, during the pontificate of the magnificent Leo X., and of his successors, Adrian VI., Clement VII., and Paul III., with brief intervals of coldness and mistrust, Erasmus was ever honoured, and even courted. His advice was constantly sought, and his powerful support desired. No honour in the gift of Rome, however great, was too great for Erasmus, had he only deigned to accept it.

On the educated classes of Europe generally, his influence, after the publication of his Greek New Testament, was enormous. His voluminous and varied correspondence tells us how many of these constantly wrote to him for advice and counsel during this momentous period. Everything he wrote was multiplied by the printing-presses into thousands of copies, and was eagerly devoured in all countries by thinking men of very different degrees and parties. A few lines of his in a letter addressed to an anonymous personage of the highest importance—perhaps the elector of Saxony, before the Diet of Worms—in 1521, when his assistance was

earnestly asked for, both by the Lutheran and the Catholic parties, will show the attitude adopted by Erasmus in the great dispute, and the special work he considered God had called him to do.

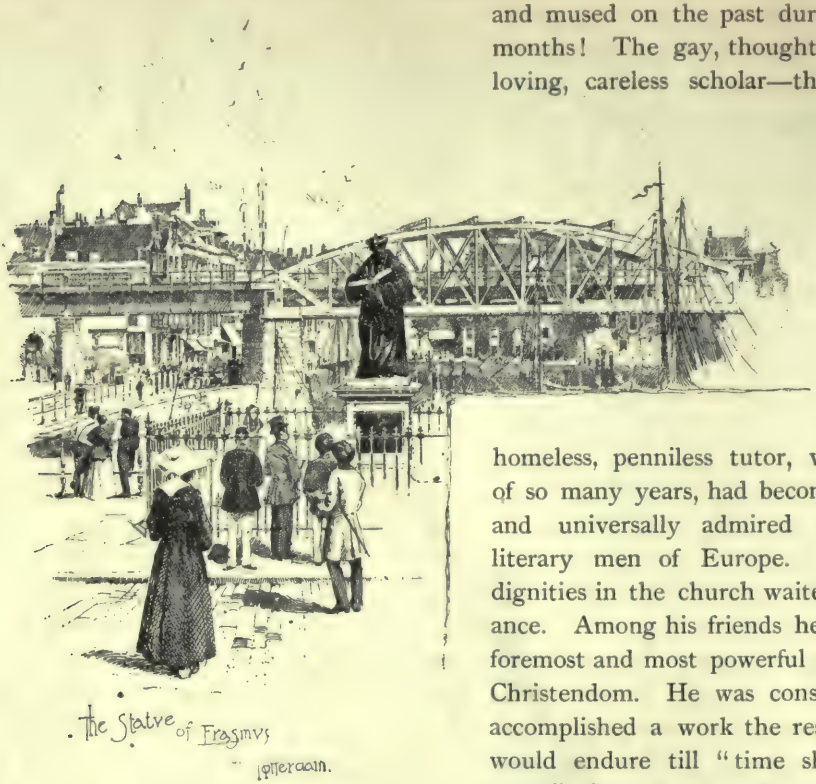
"You tell me that a few words of mine will carry more weight than papal thunderbolts. You could urge nothing more calculated to keep me silent. Who am I, that I should contradict the Catholic church? If I was sure the holy see was wrong, I would say so on a proper occasion; but it is no duty of mine to decide. *My work has been to restore a buried literature, and recall divines from their hair-splitting to a knowledge of the New Testament.*"

What that work had been, and how it was regarded by all whose opinion carried real weight, is admirably shown in a letter addressed to him by the greatest in dignity and power in the world of his day—the emperor Charles V. The letter is dated December, A.D. 1527:—

"Dear and honoured sir,—Two things make your letter welcome to me. The receipt of any communication from a person whom I regard with so much affection is itself a pleasure. . . . The whole church of Christ is your debtor as much as I am. You have done for it what emperors, popes, princes, and academies have tried in vain to do. I congratulate you from my heart. You must now complete the work which you have begun so successfully, and you may rely on all possible support from me." Then, alluding apologetically to a promise he had given to the Inquisition to examine the writings of Erasmus, in reference to a clamorous request on the part of the enemies of the great reformer, the emperor goes on, in language of remarkable assurance, to express his sure confidence respecting the issue of such an inquisitorial examination into writings and works which he, in common with the majority of thoughtful, earnest men, admired with an ungrudging admiration: "It is true we have allowed your works to be examined, but in this you have no reason for alarm. Human errors may be discovered in them, but the worst that can befal you will be an affectionate admonition. You will then be able to correct or explain, and Christ's little ones will not be offended. *You will establish your immortal reputation*, and shut the mouths of your detractors. Take courage, therefore; be assured that I shall never cease to respect and esteem you. . . . Remember me in your prayers."

Erasmus' work-filled life produced much besides his *opus magnum*, which we have been dwelling on with so much loving admiration; but with the exception of his great edition of the works of St. Jerome, his other writings are chiefly interesting owing to the strong light they throw on the history of public opinion of the time. Many of his letters and his "colloquies" are of inestimable value to the student of the Reformation era. Vivid, picturesque, and lucid, possessing a peculiar charm of their own, they will ever preserve a high value among the treasures of historic literature. His other writings, such as his "Praise of Folly" (Encomium Moriæ), "Religiosi et Monachi," etc., great though their influence was at the time, contain much that is regrettable and exaggerated; brilliant, witty, and amusing, it may be

questioned whether the harm they worked among the many thoughtless and irreligious readers who eagerly perused them, did not more than counterbalance the good they no doubt effected by calling attention to the crying abuses and errors of the religious practice of the day.



The end of the great life came in A.D. 1536. Nearly seventy years of toil and struggle, darkened by much painful sickness, were to end at last. Parts of the years 1535-6 were quietly spent at Basle, where this world-famed scholar had many friends: this city, he fancied, suited his failing health. We have some of his letters, written in that concluding stage of his life-journey, which tells us something of his mind as he felt the end approaching. Would we had more; for the thoughts of Erasmus, at such a time, possess for us an absorbing interest.

What a retrospect was his as he sat and mused on the past during these last months! The gay, thoughtless, pleasure-loving, careless scholar—the wandering, homeless, penniless tutor, writer, satirist of so many years, had become the famous and universally admired chief of the literary men of Europe. The highest dignities in the church waited his acceptance. Among his friends he counted the foremost and most powerful personages in Christendom. He was conscious he had accomplished a work the result of which would endure till "time should be no more." Some ten months before his death, he wrote in one of his letters the following beautiful words: "My life has been long—if measured by years (nearly seventy). Take from it the time lost in struggling against gout and stone, it has not been very much after all. You talk of the great name I shall leave behind me, and which posterity is never to let die. I care nothing for fame, and nothing for posterity. *I desire only to go home, and to find favour with Christ.*"

Erasmus had had the rare fortune to

meet in the course of his life's journey two really great and good men, who had taught him the true secret of life, and how to use the vast and precious talents entrusted to him. Colet and More had shown him how beautiful a thing it was to be a Christian. These two friends had inspired him to work at his Greek New Testament, the publication of which

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER.
(*From a sketch by Holbein in Erasmus' "Encomium Moriæ."*)

revolutionised religious thought. Of these friends to whom he owed so much, Colet had died years before, and Erasmus had indeed mourned his irreparable loss. And More was just gone. Now Erasmus, as he sat in his quiet study-chamber at Basle, must often have thought of that sunny, loving man, his dearest friend for years—scholar, saint, and statesman—whose disfigured head just then was the ghastly ornament on the gate of London Bridge. Thus he wrote of him a few months before his own death: "You will learn, from a letter I enclose, the fate of Thomas More and the bishop of Rochester (Fisher). They were the wisest and most saintly men that

"THE PALMER'S EXPERIENCE."
(*From a sketch by Holbein in Erasmus' "Encomium Moriæ."*)

England had. In the death of More I feel as if I had died myself. . . . We had but one soul between us."

With all his honours and undreamed-of success, a sense of failure must have oppressed the sick and weary old man at the end. The quiet but thorough reformation he had worked for, he must have seen would never be seriously taken in hand. The hierarchy in different lands were blind. The papal court was indifferent. His friend the emperor too often allowed policy, not righteousness, to guide him; he was

THE SCRIVENER.
(*From a sketch by Holbein in Erasmus' "Encomium Moriæ."*)

what men would nowadays term a skilful opportunist — little more. Henry VIII., king of England, from whom he hoped so much, must have grievously disappointed him, as he watched him of whom quite recently he had written, "I love the king, who has always been good to me," becoming entangled in the meshes of an illicit passion, and shaping his policy, civil and religious, with a view to its gratification. Germany was almost aflame with civil war, so intensely in earnest were its bold reformers. The general council of the church he had so longed for, seemed farther off than ever. Wherever he cast his tired eyes, clouds and thick darkness met his anxious gaze. He longed "*to go home*."

He still wrote playfully with a dash of his old winning humour, but the fun was sad at best. The year before he died we come upon this passage in one of his letters: "The cardinal of St. Angelo (the ambassador in Germany from Pope Paul III.) has given me a magnificent gold cup as a sign of his goodwill. I produced it for my friends, G—— and R——, who were dining with me. R—— insisted that I should take my medicine as well as my wine out of it." To the exalted personages who wished even to the end to confer some high dignity upon him, he thus replied, writing to the cardinal of Trent, who was deputed by the king of the Romans to tell Erasmus to ask what he would of him: "I am much gratified, and I regret that I am not able to thank the prince in person. You bid me ask some favour of him, which you undertake that he will grant. Would that king Christ had sent me such a message: of Him I should have much to ask. From the king of the Romans I can desire nothing beyond what his goodness already supplies. I am fit for nothing but study. High office would be a fresh burden on the back of a broken-down old horse. Wealth at the end of life is but fresh luggage, when the journey is over. Neither Pope nor emperor can delay the advance of years, or make bad health into good. Would they could!" This was written in 1532.

In 1535 he writes to similar purpose on hearing that the Pope desired to raise him to the cardinalate: "His Holiness spoke of me in high terms, and mentioned me for a cardinalate. Alas! I can scarce put my head out of my room, or draw a breath of air which has not been warmed artificially. And am I to be thinking of red hats? However, I am glad that the Pope wishes me well."

A few months later, in 1536, Erasmus breathed his last, without fear, and was buried in state in the cathedral of Basle.

One more important work of the same nature as the Greek Testament of Erasmus must be noticed. Some six years after the bringing out of the latter, was published at Alcala (Complutum), in the Spanish province of New Castile, the book known as the Complutensian Polyglott. This noble work, in six folio volumes, contained the New and Old Testaments and the Apocrypha. In the Old Testament the Latin Vulgate holds the chief place in the middle of the three columns, the Hebrew and the Septuagint Greek being printed on either side. The New Testament contained the Greek text and that modification of the Vulgate then current, in parallel columns.

In any age this folio edition of the Holy Scriptures in various languages would have been reckoned as a most important and valuable work; but, considering how short a time had elapsed since the first introduction of the art of printing, it was indeed a marvellous production. It was designed and carried out by the perseverance and splendid munificence of cardinal Ximenes, archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain. Nearly twenty years passed from the date of Ximenes' first conception of the mighty work, before it was published and given to the world. It is said to have cost an enormous sum. From the first this edition of the Scriptures must have been scarce and dear, for only six hundred copies were printed. Various Greek manuscripts of the New Testament were procured by the cardinal and his agents, and were used in the construction of the text. It is not, however, probable that any of those documents, which are now considered of high antiquity or of first-rate importance, were employed by the editors. The text it exhibits does not widely differ from that of most Greek manuscripts written from the tenth century downwards.

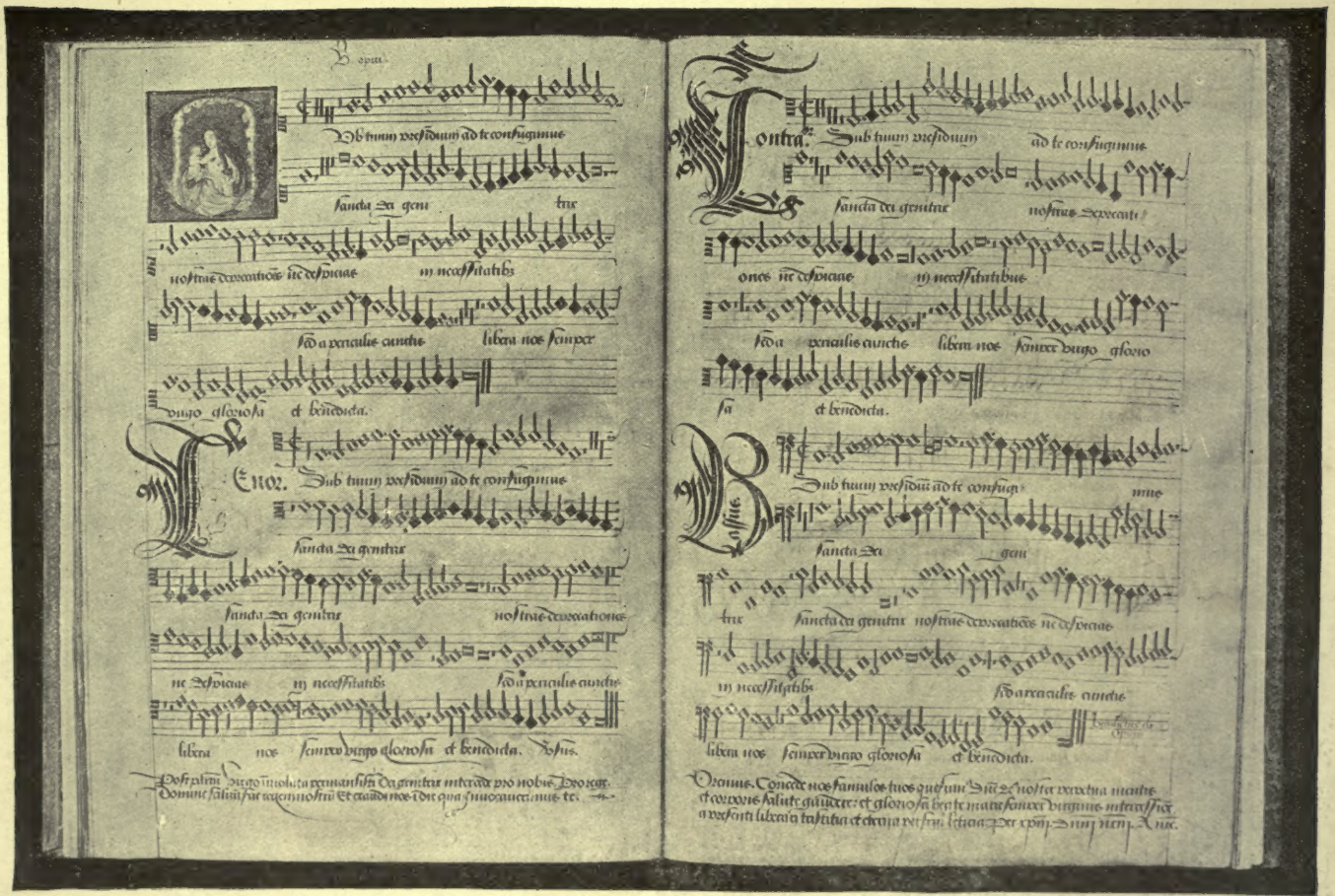
Its rarity and costliness, of course, prevented any wide or general circulation, and its influence upon public opinion was incomparably less than the handier and more accessible Greek Testament put out by Erasmus, who, besides, had the start of Ximenes' Complutensian edition by nearly six years. This great Spanish Polyglot was seen and examined by Erasmus in A.D. 1522, and he availed himself of its aid in the improvement of his own text in the later editions of the Greek Testament which he published.

When the archbishop of Toledo was shown the Greek Testament of Erasmus, which thus appeared before his grander edition was quite ready for publication, his principal editor, Stunica, tried to depreciate it. The old man very nobly replied: "Would to God all the Lord's people were prophets! Produce better, if thou canst; but condemn not the industry of others."

Without the work of Erasmus and Tyndale, the English translator, the Reformation would never have been possible. A new light burst upon men when they read the New Testament. Primitive Christianity was, as Erasmus wrote to Colet, "overgrown with thorns and briars." The Christian religion, as taught and practised in the later mediæval ages, largely consisted in the mass and in confessions; in elaborate ceremonials, rituals, processions, pilgrimages; prayers to the Virgin and the saints; in an exaggerated and unhealthy reverence for shrines, relics, and images. It seemed as though the Christian world was sunk in a long deep sleep. Out of this deathlike torpor it was awaked by Erasmus, who put the New Testament once more in the hands of scholars; and by Luther in Germany and Tyndale in England, who made it in their German and English translations accessible to all sorts and conditions of men. Erasmus's work, to use his own nervous words, was "to restore a buried literature; to recall divines from hair-splitting to a knowledge of the New Testament." The view which English scholars took of him is expressed

by Colet, who wrote to him, in the letter already quoted, how he "so loved his friend's work that he clasped it to his heart." He tells him how he admires his eloquence; his very length he felt was brevity. "Go on, Erasmus," he wrote in the passage already cited, and then proceeds: ". . . In making known the Scriptures your fortune cannot fail you. Only put your trust in God, who will be the first to help you, and will stir up others to aid you in your sacred labours."

Dean Colet was not alone in his admiration of Erasmus's work on the New Testament. Other scholars at once joined in the chorus of praise of the noble student of the "Word." For instance, William Latimer of Oxford, one of the earliest great scholars in England, expressed his ardent approval of the new Latin translation; archbishop Warham, the pious and learned archbishop of Henry VII. and Henry VIII.—the link, so to speak, between the old and new learning—recommended the Greek version and new Latin translation to his brother bishops and to divines. "All," he wrote to Erasmus, "acknowledge that the work was worthy of the labour bestowed upon it." Fox, bishop of Winchester, in a great assembly of magnates, declared that "Erasmus's new Latin version threw so much light on the New Testament that it was worth to him more than ten commentaries." The dean of Salisbury, another famous scholar, used well-nigh the same words. More's praise is well known. On the continent of Europe, to take two conspicuous examples: Melancthon, that deep, profound, and tender theologian, was amongst the foremost of his admirers; and Luther caught the spirit which the labours of Erasmus had diffused, and set himself to the study of Greek and Hebrew, with a result the western world was soon conscious of.

Before Erasmus brought out and gave to the world his first edition of the New Testament in Greek and Latin in 1516, and Luther his German translation in 1522, and Tyndale his English translation in 1525–26, so much only of the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament was known to the laity, as was read in church services. Of the rest of the Bible little, comparatively speaking, was practically known at all. Copies of the Scriptures were rare, shut up in monastic libraries, and studied only by professional theologians. Conventional interpretations, too, were given to the text, which too often corrupted or distorted its meaning. Much even of what was read in the public services, was so read or intoned as to convey little meaning to the ordinary listener. Erasmus bitterly remarks how "St. Paul said 'he would rather speak five words with a reasonable meaning in them than ten thousand in an unknown tongue.' They chant nowadays in our churches in what is an unknown tongue, and nothing else. . . . Modern church music is so constructed that the congregation cannot hear one distinct word. The choristers themselves do not understand what they are saying. . . . Why will they not listen to St. Paul? In college or monastery it is still the same—music, nothing but music. There was no music in St. Paul's time. Words were then pronounced plainly. Words nowadays mean nothing: they are mere sounds striking upon the ear. . . . Boys are kept in the English

MOTETT FOR FOUR VOICES BY BENEDICTUS DE OPICIIS, A.D. 1516.

From a Volume of Motetts, etc., which belonged to Henry VIII. (*British Museum.*)

Benedictine colleges solely and simply to sing morning hymns to the Virgin. If they want music, let them sing psalms, like rational beings." . . . "They bray out psalms," he says in another writing, "in the churches like so many jackasses. They do not understand a word of them, but they fancy the sound is soothing to the ears of the saints." This picture is probably somewhat exaggerated, but there is no doubt that the way in which the Scriptures were read or said or intoned or sung, was too often utterly unintelligible to the masses.

In his "paraclesis" or preface to his New Testament, Erasmus inveighs bitterly against the mediæval spirit, which was evidently unwilling that the sacred Scriptures should be read by the unlearned and translated into the vulgar tongue, "as though Christ had taught such subtleties that they can be scarcely understood even by a few theologians, or as though the strength of the Christian religion consisted in men's ignorance of it. The mysteries of kings," he added, "it may be safer to conceal; but Christ wished His mysteries to be published as openly as possible. The weakest should read the Gospel," went on our scholar reformer, "should read the Epistles of Paul. I wish these were translated into all languages." "Why," he asks, "are the schoolmen studied rather than the Gospels? What are Albertus Magnus, Aquinas, and Occam in comparison with Christ? The New Testament—the evangelical writings—these are the food of the soul. They must permeate the very depth of the heart and mind." "Too often was Christ utterly forgotten," said Erasmus. "Doctrines of human invention were too often preached; so the Gospel of Christ faded out; in a little while," wrote the scholar reformer, "would the last spark of Christianity have been extinguished, and we should have been enslaved in a worse than Jewish ceremonial; and there were good men even among theologians who see these things and deplore them. . . . The sacred writings are set aside as antiquated. No word of Christ is heard in the pulpits."

The awakening of men's minds was sudden, the effect tremendous. When scholars read, as many of them did in all the lands of western Christendom, the words of Christ and His Apostles in the Greek New Testament published by Erasmus, and in his faithful Latin translation; when the people read and listened to the same divine sayings in the beautiful true renderings of Tyndale in English and of Luther in German, then was, indeed, a new, strong light thrown upon religion. In these divers writings there was much about *Christ* and His loving work, much about the ever-blessed eternal sacrifice, the precious blood which cleanseth from all sin; but nothing about the images which men had come to look on with such awful reverence, or about the roods they had been taught to visit and to pray before; nothing bearing upon the intercession of saints or the wondrous virtue of relics; nothing about pilgrimages to holy sites, to tombs, and places hallowed by holy martyrdoms and saintly lives. Above all, in that New Testament, so long a sealed book, as they turned over its charmed pages they sought, but sought in vain, for any hint as to the power of the Blessed Virgin with her divine Son. Blessed, indeed, was she mirrored there among women, but for the

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